

# A · KEEPER · OF THE · ROBES



· FRANKFORT · MOORE















THE KEEPER OF THE ROBES











Queen Charlotte, Consort of George III.

*From the painting by T. Gainsborough in the Victoria and Albert  
Museum, South Kensington.*



THE  
KEEPER OF THE ROBES

(Frances Burney)

BY

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## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER I

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	I

### CHAPTER II

HER BIRTH AND PARENTAGE . . . . .	25
-----------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER III

A PLEASANT HOUSEHOLD . . . . .	39
--------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER IV

FEELING HER WAY . . . . .	53
---------------------------	----

### CHAPTER V

THE SPIRIT OF COMEDY . . . . .	65
--------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST STEP . . . . .	79
--------------------------	----

	PAGE
CHAPTER VII	
A BRILLIANT SUCCESS . . . . .	93
CHAPTER VIII	
THE REWARDS OF SUCCESS . . . . .	105
CHAPTER IX	
AN IMPORTANT CONNECTION . . . . .	121
CHAPTER X	
IN THE SERVICE OF THE QUEEN . . . . .	133
CHAPTER XI	
THE DAILY ROUND . . . . .	147
CHAPTER XII	
THE QUEEN'S BELL . . . . .	165
CHAPTER XIII	
THE PRINCESSES . . . . .	181
CHAPTER XIV	
A GALLERY OF PORTRAITS . . . . .	195



# CONTENTS

vii

## CHAPTER XV

	PAGE
A ROOMFUL OF COLONELS . . . . .	213

## CHAPTER XVI

THE TERROR OF THE PALACE . . . . .	229
------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XVII

THE ADVENTURES OF A NEOPHYTE . . . . .	249
--	-----

## CHAPTER XVIII

A DAY OF WAITING . . . . .	261
----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XIX

LEARNING HER BUSINESS . . . . .	275
---------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XX

COMEDIES OF THE COURT . . . . .	289
---------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XXI

THE TRAGIC MUSE . . . . .	307
---------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XXII

THE CARICATURIST . . . . .	323
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIII		PAGE
THE PAGEANT OF IMPEACHMENT . . . . .		337
CHAPTER XXIV		
MISS BURNEY'S TRIAL . . . . .		351
CHAPTER XXV		
MR. BURKE MAKES HIS SPEECH . . . . .		365
CHAPTER XXVI		
FROM WESTMINSTER HALL TO FAUCONBERG HALL . . . . .		379
CHAPTER XXVII		
A REIGN OF TERROR . . . . .		397
CHAPTER XXVIII		
A REMARKABLE INTERVIEW . . . . .		413
CHAPTER XXIX		
EXCURSIONS AND ALARUMS . . . . .		425
CHAPTER XXX		
CONCERNING MADAME D'ARBLAY . . . . .		447



## ILLUSTRATIONS

QUEEN CHARLOTTE, CONSORT OF GEORGE III. . . . . *Frontispiece*

From the picture by T. Gainsborough, in the Victoria and  
Albert Museum, South Kensington

FACING PAGE

GARRICK AND HIS WIFE . . . . . 42

From the picture by Hogarth in the Royal Collection

FRANCES BURNEY . . . . . 82

From the picture by her cousin, E. F. Burney

MRS. DELANY . . . . . 124

From the picture by Opie, painted by command of George III.  
in the National Portrait Gallery

QUEEN CHARLOTTE . . . . . 246

From the picture by Sir William Beechey, R.A.

ELIZABETH FARREN (AFTERWARDS COUNTESS OF DERBY) . . 314

From the pastel by Ozias Humphrey, R.A., in the National  
Gallery, Dublin

MRS. SIDDONS . . . . . 430

From the picture by Sir William Beechey, R.A., in the National  
Portrait Gallery





## INTRODUCTORY





## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

MOST whimsical of all the Chronicles of Kissing noted by Mr. Pepys in his Diary is the record of his experience upon one occasion in Westminster Abbey. Some alterations were being carried out which made it necessary to disturb the tomb of Jane Seymour, and the workmen had unceremoniously turned out the remains of the Queen before the eyes of Mr. Pepys, pretty much, it seems to us, as the First Clown in *Hamlet* did the bones of Yorick at the feet of the Prince and his companion, Horatio; and, like Hamlet, Mr. Pepys picked up the skull, but not to point a moral. "I did kiss the lips of a dead Queen," he recorded, and evidently felt proud of the act, though he did not enlarge upon it with the gusto that marks his references to his more animated essays of the same type. "I did kiss the lips of a dead Queen!"

It seems to us that a good many of the historical records of the lives of "crowned heads" afford a reader no greater treat than that which was available to Mr. Pepys in Westminster Abbey. They offer us the fleshless lips of a dead monarch to kiss. When we want to get close to the flesh and blood that go

to the making of a king or queen, we are handed a fully bleached skull and asked to satisfy ourselves with that. The reading of a good deal of that matter which passes as history no more brings us in contact with the man who was King or the woman who was Queen than the solitary chaste kiss of Pepys let him into any of the secrets of the life of Queen Jane Seymour ; and that is how it comes that the reading of history suggests little beyond the opening up of old graves and the tumbling out of inarticulated bones.

Happily, there have been several notable and precious exceptions to this rule which made the science of the historian one with that of the osteologist ; and we have become as happily intimate with the homes of some of our sovereigns as we were with their palaces. We have been brought into touch with august personages, and found them to be delightfully flesh and blood, arousing our sympathies, and even our affections, making plain a great deal that had been obscure, and thus giving us a chance of seeing the true perspective and the right proportions of the figures in that series of living pictures which we call history. Among such records we are disposed to give a high place in point of interest to the Diary kept by Fanny Burney during the five years she spent in daily association with Queen Charlotte, Consort of George III., discharging the duties of the intimate office of Keeper of the Robes. It was an exceptional thing that a woman of imagination and intelligence, a woman possessing great powers of observation and description, a woman whose records could be



implicitly relied on, should occupy a situation which demanded the exercise of none of these qualities, but which was, at the same time, eminently calculated to give the holder innumerable opportunities of displaying them through the medium adopted by Fanny Burney. A secretary must be secret, and such a Royal official soon acquires so great a habit of secrecy that his capacity to reveal anything becomes atrophied; hence, although in a position of close intimacy in regard to his master, he makes the most indifferent of recorders : his revelations are only revelations of his own incapacity in this direction. It would seem as if the other personal officials of a king or queen were chosen by reason of their unswerving loyalty to the traditions that made the possession of exceptional ability on their part almost an impertinence. The English monarchs had little to fear from the intelligence of their customary entourage, least of all the Hanoverian Georges. But suddenly there appeared in the form of a humble, but an intimate attendant upon Queen Charlotte, a young woman whose ability as an observer and a writer had been acknowledged and applauded by the greatest intellects in Europe—a young woman whose sense of comedy only fell short of enabling her to perceive the incongruous elements in her own occupation in relation to the Queen ; and the result was, as might have been expected, a narrative of at least some phases of the home-life of Royalty such as had never before been written. The pages of Fanny Burney's Diary are illuminating, not with that strong light that beats upon a throne, but rather

with the chastened flame of the bedroom taper—thin, but held very close indeed to the Royal personages, not causing our eyes to be dazzled by any reflected effulgence, but giving us an opportunity of seeing them with delightful intimacy. To say that the Diary shows us Royalty in a new light is to make the most general comment upon it. To say that it shows King George III. and his wife in the most appropriate illumination is to be a little more appreciative of its real value. They were the monarchs of the domestic taper, not of the garish footlights. They were the sovereigns of the hearth and home, not of the pageant and palace, and the story of their life did not lend itself to the bard of the heroic, but to the chronicler of the humdrum; and it is because Fanny Burney showed herself to be a finished artist of this *genre* that we feel she was deserving of the position which she occupied in the literature of her day, many years before her Diary was given to the world. Reading those of its pages that refer to the five years of her life spent in attendance on Queen Charlotte, one is led to wonder what any other woman writer of the period would have made of the same unpromising materials. We do not need to guess what would have been made of them by one of those brilliant writers who have given us such vivid pictures of some of the Courts of France—a chapter of finished cynicism and consummate slight would have been sufficient for their purpose, unless they had a reserve of witticism of which they were anxious to get rid. It was the period of exquisite insincerity among the aristocracy both of



France and England, and Boucher, Watteau, and Fragonard were the interpreters of the life which was lived by the former and aped by the latter. But the mob which broke into the Tuileries was intolerably sincere, and of the orgy that followed Fragonard would have been the most unsympathetic limner.

Reading Fanny Burney's records during these eventful years, we begin to perceive how it was that, with the spirit of Revolution moving over the face of the earth, no English palace was in jeopardy. Let us look about for a picture that is as typical of the English Court as one of Fragonard's was of the French. We have it before us in Van Eyck's portraits of Jean Arnolfini and his wife—the quintessence of the humdrum as it appears to the superficial observer—humdrum to a point of laughter, it may be; but there is something solid as well as stolid in it: we feel that it is not the house of Jean Arnolfini and Jeanne de Chenany that an infuriated mob would attack and sack; and that is just what we feel when we see that picture painted by Fanny Burney of Bürgermeister George and his Hausfrau Charlotte. The maddest of mobs would have paused before breaking in a single panel of the house-door of this worthy and commonplace couple. No one could think of this pair spending their days and nights planning a Little Trianon or discussing from every standpoint one of the masterpieces of Rissener or Gouthière; while the thought of associating the good woman with a mystery of a diamond necklace would be as ridiculous as that of Marie Antoinette's looking with gravity

upon the "mosaic" flower studies of Mrs. Delany, done with coloured foil by the aid of scissors and paste.

No more instructive pages of real history than these of Fanny Burney do we seek to read. She may not let us into any secret that could not be read without her assistance, but her evidence is that of an eye-witness of a situation respecting which nearly all the rest of the evidence is circumstantial. She was present, she saw, and she possessed the most important essential to a good witness—the capacity to describe all that she saw. She was quite guiltless of having any object in writing beyond the discharge of the most ordinary duty of a daughter in respect of her father and the other members of her family. She was quite unconscious of there being any political situation in England or elsewhere; and she most certainly regarded the French Revolution with the horror that it inspired at English tea-tables. She heard of its barbarities with a shudder; they were in her eyes, as in the eyes of thousands of her countrymen, nothing more than the accidental outburst of a handful of cut-throats. She never thought of inquiring if it was possible that the Revolution was the natural result of a people's awaking to a knowledge of their own power and of the impotency of their oppressors; and when she was writing of the simple homely life of the Royal pair, who were worse housed, worse fed, and worse attended than hundreds of their subjects, she would have been frightened to death if any one had hinted to her that she was making a valuable contribution to the knowledge of posterity, helping to tell posterity

how it was that, while the awaking of the French nation was being followed by such terrific results, the English people were yelling objurgations against the physicians whom they thought dilatory in restoring King George to health! It was the awaking to a knowledge of the ease with which the awful barrier standing as a sacred and mysterious circle between a king and his people could be broken through, that produced the atrocities of the Revolution; and Fanny Burney enables us to see that it was because the King and Queen of England had already broken down this barrier between them and their people that a Revolution in England could have had no chance of success. She lets us see that the place which was called a Royal palace in England was no more a palace than is the dwelling of a bishop which is so styled.

The King and Queen of England had never shown any desire to live in splendour in a castle overtopping every turret in the country. Only one palace worthy of the name was there in England, and it was built by a subject and appropriated by one sovereign, only to be abandoned by another and at last turned into a home for deserving gentlewomen with no objection to living in the suburbs. All the other Royal residences were even more absurd in the eighteenth century than they are to-day, when a Queen may truthfully say, as the homeliest of all said to one of her subjects, "I have come from my house to your palace."

The Diary written by Fanny Burney to her father and sisters between the dust and draughts of a jerry-built annexe to Windsor Castle and the blue-mould



and mildew of a barrack at Kew, lets us see in a moment how, by a laughable paradox, the King and Queen of England were protected by the dilapidations of their homes from the spirit that was aroused by the artistic glories of the Great and Little Trianon and the splendours of Versailles and the Tuileries. Mad though a mob might be, burning to avenge the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of those who had surrounded themselves with luxuries purchased at the price of the starvation of the people, no mob would be ridiculous enough to think of kicking in the panel of a hall-door in order to annoy a respectable couple at tea in the back parlour. It is the chronicler of that tea in the back parlour who appears to us as a more instructive historian than the recorder of those shufflings of place-hunters that people call "politics." It does not matter that the chronicler never sees the good old things as they really are and as she describes them (all unconsciously) for the benefit of posterity—it does not matter that she is revealing the fact that the glamour which was, and is still, associated with the idea of Royalty was constantly getting between her and her subject—the pictures that she paints convey to us all the same what we feel to be the truth, for she never tries to throw a glamour over her readers, forcing them to sing Titania's song over her "gentle joy" with the "great fat ears." She allows them to see in clear air all that she saw through the roseate mist that clings to Royalty, and they feel that she has done her duty to her readers, her duty to her sovereigns, and her duty to herself.

The splendid imagination of Gainsborough—a genius who thought in colour, and possessed even more than the power of Turner in getting at the truth by the aid of innumerable inaccuracies—was equal to the task of imparting the splendour of the legend of majestic Royalty to his portrait of the homely Queen Charlotte ; and Fanny Burney seemed ever to have that masterpiece before her when touching upon her Royal mistress and her spouse ; but its influence is as nothing upon her art : no matter how Gainsborough showed us Royalty, on Fanny Burney's canvas there appears the picture of Jean Arnolfini and his wife.

For one to appreciate exactly the value of the Diary kept by her during the five years of her attendance upon the Queen, one must get to know something of Fanny Burney. Unless one starts with a knowledge of a biographer, one must fail to come to a reasonable conclusion as to the value of his work. We know nothing of the value of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* unless we learn all that his associates can tell us respecting Boswell ; and when we do so, we know exactly what his records are worth ; and until we have learned what Byron thought of Moore, we cannot fully appreciate Moore's *Life of Byron*. It may also be said with due solemnity that we never estimated at its true value a recent voluminous *Life of Christ* until the author made public his bitter grievance against the firm who issued it, for having greatly underpaid him—a grievance which he quite failed to substantiate. With as great brevity as we think consistent

with our intention of enabling a reader to judge of the capacity of Fanny Burney to put together a record that should be accepted as worthy of a high place in the literature of Royalty, we shall refer to her life and achievements up to the time of her receiving the appointment of Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte. We have ventured to express our own opinion on this subject, but our readers may not think that it is justifiable by facts. All such conclusions must be regarded as matters of individual opinion. If we have an uneasy impression that Fanny Burney's refraining from any but the most enthusiastic comments upon the domestic life of the Queen was due more to her own blind loyalty to the tradition that every act of Her Majesty was bound to be majestic, than to any habitual graciousness on the part of the Royal lady—if we feel inclined to smile at her countless references to "the dear Queen" and at her constant hints that she knew her own place—if we are now and again irritated at her assuming that she was, like the dust of the earth, to lie beneath the feet of the Queen and so to allow Her Majesty to go more softly on her way, the value of her records does not seem to us to be lessened thereby. It is, however, only when we have come to know Fanny Burney that we instinctively "write off," as it were, the requisite amount from her eulogies of every form of Royalty in order to arrive at a just conclusion as to the character and personal traits of Queen Charlotte and her spouse. But when we have made these deductions we cannot but feel that the picture that remains upon our mind is



both interesting and valuable. To be sure, the impression that we retain is that of a picture of two tabby cats sitting by the domestic hearth, although the painter fondly believed that she was depicting the king of beasts and his queen grandly standing among the palms under the blaze of a tropical sun ; but that is an unimportant detail.

Like so many great artists, Fanny Burney worked under certain self-imposed restrictions. She never let herself go, so to speak, in referring to her Royalties. She writes as if the Queen were always looking over her shoulder. She writes in a decorous whisper which we are sure was her speaking voice when in the presence of her mistress. She writes with constant tact and with uniform discretion. There are a good many people who seem to believe that to write of indiscretions at all is indiscreet, but there are still more who seem to think that all Court history is but a catalogue of indiscretions. Certainly, if from the most widely read Court annals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whether relating to France or England, the pages relating to the indiscretions of the chief personages were to be eliminated, there would be little left to read. There was no lack of material for a voluminous chronicle of scandals within the Palace circle when various members of the Royal Family of both sexes had come to their years of indiscretion, but Fanny Burney, even if such materials had been within her reach, would never have made use of them. She was "too much the lady" to do so—the phrase of the servants' hall

seems to us to define exactly her attitude when sitting down to post up her journals for the benefit of her father and sisters. A good deal that would have formed the basis of a piquant page or two must have come under her notice, but she does not even go so far as to hold up her fan before her face, so to speak, in any part of her Court Diary; she does not even give us a sly look while shaking her head with the feather end of her pen upon her lips—the literary attitude of some of the French compilers of their *Chroniques Scandaleuses*. She was “too much the lady.” The furthest that she goes in this direction is when she writes in a whisper of Madame de Genlis and her own consultations with the Queen on the advisability of keeping the animated Frenchwoman at a distance. The consequence is that on every page we get a picture of a domestic hearth that is pleasant to the eyes and good to see; and we feel that even if she had continued of the Household during the years when some of the Princesses were giving their parents cause for a great deal of uneasiness, she would have ignored their imprudences with the pen of prudence, if not with the pen of a prude. There have been people who, on account of her reticence on such points as these, on which people would like to be fully informed, laughed at her as a prude; but we must confess that we have never felt shocked by her prudery, as we have been by that of many of the “lady-writers” who came into existence fifty years later. She wrote naturally, pleasantly, and sincerely, and she makes herself

beloved by reason of her effort to make us love the Royal Family.

But in dealing with the one supreme episode that broke in on the monotony of her five years' servitude with terrible disorder, Fanny Burney gives us a vivid chapter of as valuable history as was ever written by man or woman. Her account of the first approach and the progress of the malady from which George III. suffered seems to us to be as fine a piece of work of its kind as was ever done. It is not merely pictorial, it is human. The same subject, the madness of a king, was dealt with by the imagination of the Master of all tragic writing. When Shakespeare's King Lear cries out, "Ay, every inch a King!" Fanny Burney's cries, "Ay, every inch a Man!" Of course, any comparison between King Lear and King George would be ludicrous; but there are such human touches in Fanny Burney's narrative as make us feel that she had the genius of observation if not of imagination. If the years of her servitude at Court had produced nothing beyond this part of her Diary, we should still feel disposed to regard with leniency the decision of her father to allow her to remain in attendance upon the Queen for so long a period instead of keeping her within the delightful circle of their friends at his house in St. Martin's Street.

Dr. Burney has been from time to time not merely censured but absolutely abused for the part he played in this transaction, and never more severely than by Lord Macaulay. But Macaulay should have been



the last man in the world just at that moment to say a word against Dr. Burney, for he had before him the brilliant fruits of Dr. Burney's persistence—he was making the Diary the excuse for his essay ; and for any man with such evidence before him of Fanny Burney's having made good use of her time during these years, to rail against her father for having given her the chance (of which she availed herself to the full) of producing the invaluable part of her valuable work, was surely as absurd as it was unjust. Fanny Burney undoubtedly suffered a good deal when sent from the midst of the interesting circle in St. Martin's Street to attend upon a Queen who was only made interesting by the literary skill of Fanny Burney. But one might have thought that Macaulay would, in such a case, have assumed the attitude of the unbiassed critic and acknowledged that the tangible results of her servitude more than justified the father's sacrifice of his daughter. That is certainly the view of the transaction that is taken by modern readers. When we have brought before us nowadays, either through the medium of a book or, more likely, of the five miles of films on a cinematograph, the sufferings of Arctic explorers, do we find ourselves ready to bring a railing accusation against the people who financed the expedition? Not as a rule. We unconsciously put the results in the scale against the sufferings and feel that the former far outweigh the latter. Macaulay assumed—quite unjustifiably, but that does not matter—that her five years with the Queen were equivalent to a penal sentence ; but even

if it had been so, and the outcome of her imprisonment was the Diary, we should not feel greatly incensed against her father. We do not feel greatly incensed against the enemies of the author of *Le Mie Prigioni* for giving him an opportunity of writing his affecting book ; and we are cynical enough to bless the persecutors of *The Prisoner of Chillon*, since his sufferings gave Byron a chance of writing his poem. We do not think that Dr. Burney behaved even inconsiderately to his daughter when we know that, had he kept her at home, we should have remained without that most interesting record of her years at Court. Macaulay assumes, though all the facts are against him, that, if she had remained at home, she would have written another novel as good as *Evelina* or *Cecilia*. But even admitting that he had some grounds for such an assumption, will any one say that the Diary was not more than an equivalent of either, or both, of these works?

What, however, are the actual facts of the case? Fanny Burney wrote *Evelina*. Four years after the marvellous success of this book, she produced *Cecilia*. Four years later she retired from the brilliant world in which she lived into the obscurity of the palace—the Palace Wardrobe—and there she remained for five years. Immediately after her release did she make any move that would bear to be regarded as justifying Macaulay's assumption that she was prevented from writing another novel by reason of her being absorbed by her duties to the Queen? Did she, the moment she

obtained her release from that servitude, pick up her pen and produce the work which her fingers were itching to write? Not she. She allowed another five years to pass before writing her novel *Camilla*, and then she did not write it because she felt upon her the impulse of a woman of genius, but simply because she found herself in great need of some ready money! It was easy for Macaulay to ignore the fact that, of the fourteen years which elapsed between the publication of *Cecilia* and that of *Camilla*, only five were spent in the Queen's service. Surely any born novelist might contrive, without running a chance of imperilling by undue haste a well-earned reputation, by dint of hard, but not over-hard work, to produce more than one romance within a space of nine years? Many ladies who are not born novelists have succeeded in surpassing this task without actual physical suffering.

And then as regards the money part of the question—a part which Macaulay does not fail to emphasise in his own trenchant style—it will be found, we think, if we turn from flourishes to facts, that Fanny Burney did very well for herself by her connection with the Royal Robes. She received the equivalent of at least £3,500 of our money for the five years of her service, and on her retirement she was granted a pension of £100 a year, equal at a moderate estimate to £250 of our money, and this pension she drew for forty-nine years! So that in cash her servitude represented in all the sum of £15,750 of our money—far more than the aggregate earnings of all her



literary work! A good many young women, even though brought up in the midst of such a brilliant entourage as that of St. Martin's Street, would be glad to absent themselves from its felicity a while for such a remuneration.

And these calculations, it must be remembered, involve no consideration of the question of the value of the Court Diary, either by itself or in comparison with the imaginative works of the author; but they have an intimate connection with what Fanny Burney herself probably considered a very important incident in her life—namely, her marriage with the exiled French General, Alexandre d'Arblay. It was not upon the strength of a possible income arising from the writing of further novels that she and M. d'Arblay set up housekeeping, but on the strength of that pension which was granted to her by the generous appreciation of her services by the King and Queen.

On the whole, then, we are very much inclined to think that Dr. Burney was not so greatly to blame as some critics insist on our believing he was for the part he played in the transaction. At any rate, readers of the Diary dealing with this five-years period would be ungrateful if they were to say a word against him. The only people who might have been justified in shaking their heads were those who had seen his daughter previous to her accepting her appointment and then on her retirement. She had indeed changed greatly—so greatly indeed as to be barely recognisable by those of her friends from

whom she had been parted all this time, and who believed that they had been deprived of the delight of receiving another brilliant novel through her absence at the Court. These people, not knowing, as she herself did, that (to make use of an expressive colloquialism) "it was not in her" to write another novel worthy of being placed alongside *Evelina* and *Cecilia*—and not knowing (as we do) that in her Diary was the material for a far more interesting work than any novel that had come from her pen—might have been pardoned for saying a hard word or two regarding Dr. Burney, and for forgetting that it is between the ages of thirty-four and thirty-nine that the marks of the inexorable hand become most evident on the face of a woman of the temperament of his daughter. But for us who have before us all the facts of her life—who have learned by the sad example of *Camilla* that she had done her best imaginative work before she went to Court—who have seen how happy she was with her husband and son—who know that her health was not so seriously impaired by her labours at the Palace as to prevent her from surviving them for half a century—who, finally, have read with delight the pages of her Diary—for us, we repeat, to say a word against Dr. Burney for having allowed his daughter to enter the service of the Queen would be as ungrateful as it would be unjust. Macaulay was as wrong in his judgment on this point as he was, and as most other professors of the picturesque in literature are, on many other matters of greater moment.

The question as to whether or not Dr. Burney saw clearly the splendid possibilities of a Diary kept (for the first time) by a young woman of genuine literary ability and extraordinary powers of observation, coming into daily—almost hourly—contact with a Queen, has not been considered by any writer on the literature of the eighteenth century. But it seems to us to be one that is worth consideration. Dr. Burney must have been aware of the charm and of the judgment with which the early Diary of his daughter was written, though we are pretty sure that the MS. was not treated as the letters of the absent ones in India or China or Africa are treated nowadays when they arrive at their destinations, and, after being read by the “addressee,” are posted round the full family circle. We are pretty sure that the shy girl never allowed this record of her daily life to be available to all the members of the household. But to fancy that it could remain absolutely hidden from all eyes would be difficult, considering the composition of the household. There would most likely be an exchange of confidences on this matter between Fanny and her elder sister, who also kept a Diary ; and assuredly their stepmother, who had her own views respecting the exact position of the line that divided what was ladylike from what was literary, would have a word to say to her husband as to the desirability of young girls writing up a Diary. But when *Evelina* came to be published and to keep statesmen out of their beds at night reading it—when every one in the Burneys’ London was talking about



it, and it was revealed to Dr. Burney that his daughter was the most popular novelist in England, he would certainly make inquiries as to any other books of manuscript she might have by her, and she would try to atone for her want of frankness in regard to *Evelina* by placing before him every page that she had in her desk. There was nothing in the Diary that he was not welcome to read, and if he glanced at anything, he could not but have been struck by the admirable qualities of her daily jottings.

This, to be sure, is nothing more than a chain of conjectures; but is the breaking strain of the weakest link reached by a consideration of reasonable probabilities in this connection? It certainly is not. We are permitted to have a thorough acquaintance with all the members of the Burney family, and we know that they did not differ from the corresponding members of an ordinary family of dutiful children living on the best of terms with their discriminating and affectionate parents. Dr. Burney had a reputation for appreciating his chances of getting on in life; and can any one believe that such a man would fail to perceive that, in entering the Queen's service, his daughter would have such a chance of producing a chronicle of the Court as had not fallen to the lot of any young woman so highly qualified for the work as was his daughter Fanny? Horace Walpole was astute, but not more so than Burney, and he saw what a chance she would have, and expressed his regret that he should not be alive long enough to be able to see what use she had made of her oppor-

tunities. We are convinced that the careful and far-seeing father urged upon his daughter that it was her duty not to be prying into the affairs of the King and Queen, but to make a point of noting all that she saw. What we know of Fanny Burney leads us to believe that, without such an injunction from her father, she would have assumed that to keep a record of all that came under her notice would be not only the grossest presumption on her part, but a breach of confidence of the meanest sort: she would feel that she was thereby putting herself in the position of a spy upon the Royal pair whose gracious bounty she was enjoying. Little Miss Burney was extremely sensitive on such points, and it would need the exercise of some tact on her father's part to convince her that her duty lay in seeing all she could see and recording all that she saw—for the benefit of himself and her sisters, he would be tactful enough to say: he would not say a word about the public or about posterity. He may have been urged by Walpole to show his daughter in what direction her duty lay; but we do not think that it was necessary for Walpole or any one else to give him a hint on this matter.

If we have dwelt at too great length upon an apparently trivial point, our excuse must be our desire to do a tardy act of justice to an admirable man, whom it has been the fashion to abuse since a professor of the picturesque in literary style found it necessary to use him as the low lights in carrying out the scheme of chiaroscuro in his picture. The piebald

picturesqueness of Lord Macaulay has much to answer for. In any case, it must be acknowledged that we owe to Dr. Burney the existence of a unique record of the intimate life of a King and Queen of England at an interesting, not to say a critical, period ; and if we failed to acknowledge our indebtedness to him, we should be both mean and ungrateful.



**HER BIRTH AND PARENTAGE**



## CHAPTER II

### HER BIRTH AND PARENTAGE

**I**T will only be necessary for our purpose in this book to give such an account of the life of Fanny Burney up to the time of her entering the service of the Queen as may help a reader to form a correct estimate of her position in the world of men and women, as well as in the world of letters, in the year 1786, when she was thirty-four years of age, having been born on June 13, 1752. She was one of the few distinguished persons about whom little is known that is not happy. She was the fortunate daughter of a fortunate man—of a man who was an artist without having so much of an artistic temperament as interfered with his living a comfortable life—an exemplary husband, a devoted father, and a faithful friend. The home of which he was the head was a happy one, because a simple one, and because he was blest with a well-regulated mind, undisturbed by that unbalancing element known as genius. He was a musician of great ability and a teacher of music of great industry. He was a distinguished man without having become so by the production of any work of distinction, and he mixed on the friendliest terms with some of the most notable men in England and enter-



tained in his very modest house some of the most notable foreign visitors. When one is made aware of the position in the world of some of his friends, English as well as foreign, and with his own achievements, we are led to wonder how it was they were attracted to his house. If he had been a second Handel, or Purcell, or Mozart, or Haydn we could understand it, though we might be pretty sure that his house would not have been so uniformly comfortable as it was, nor would he himself have been so uniformly agreeable as a host; and, for want of a more scientific explanation, we must assume that he was in himself a delightful man. The impression that is conveyed to us by all that has been written about him by his contemporaries is that he possessed so much tact as made him appear a delightful man to every one with whom he came in contact. He had a thoroughly happy life, having apparently exercised his gift of tact upon himself, explaining to himself, without hurting his feelings or turning himself into a misanthrope, that he would do well for the sake of attaining domestic happiness to lay aside any high artistic aspirations that he may have had in starting life. Few men engaged in the pursuit of any form of art are able to remain on good terms with themselves—and their wives—on coming to such a decision; but Dr. Burney had the power of the man of talent to shape his own life in the direction of happiness. He was not the man of genius who is under the control only of a power that ignores happiness as the object of life.

His father, whose name was James MacBurney,

had been the heir to the family estates—said to be of considerable extent—in Shropshire, but having disgraced himself by taking to himself a wife who had been an actress, his father—a widower—punished him for sinking so low matrimonially by sinking himself to a deeper depth still in the same direction, marrying one of his own servants. She bore him a son, to whom he left all his estate, and who became penniless before his elder brother had christened his twenty-first and twenty-second children—twins, one of them a girl, whom he called Susannah, the other a boy, Charles, who became the father of Fanny Burney. The dropping of the Celtic prefix was not the act of his branch of the family only. It appears that the whole clan MacBurney found it more convenient to write themselves Burney, and agreed to do so. There may have been a MacBurney who disgraced himself in a more flagrant way than by a misalliance, and the others considered it due to themselves to disown the connection by the breaking away of an insignificant link.

Charles Burney was only following the example of his eldest stepbrother, who must have been nearly thirty years his senior, in showing not merely a taste for music, but a certain amount of executive skill as well. His brother had a good post as organist at St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, and with great kindness he got the celebrated Dr. Arne to take the boy as an articulated pupil. For three years at the house of Arne's beautiful sister, Mrs. Cibber, young Burney learned a few of the rudiments of his profession, and laid the founda-

tion for a number of friendships with some of the many notable people who were on intimate terms with the musician and his sister. Then it was that he was fortunate enough (from one standpoint) to become acquainted with Fulke Greville, a man of good family, good estates, and good taste ; and so greatly interested did this gentleman become in the artiched pupil that he proposed to take him back with him to his place in the country so that they might study music together. Dr. Arne, however, had found his artiched pupil so useful to him—though in what way we can only guess—that he refused to cancel his indentures except on payment of £300. This was nothing to a gentleman of wealth with a taste for music. The money was paid, and Charles Burney, confident even at that early age that his tact would enable him to live on good terms with such a patron, left the interesting house of Mrs. Cibber and her brother, and accepted the rather indefinite situation which had been offered to him. We do not doubt that his sagacity in making this change was justified, though we must confess that such a record in connection with any one else would seem to be a proof of the greatest folly. To give up the chance of perfecting himself in his profession under the instruction of so able a man as Arne, only to become the companion of a wealthy dilettante, would strike a good many people as being a hazardous experiment. It would be impossible to say, however, that it was not successful. It gave Charles Burney an opportunity of enlarging his circle of friends so as



to include a clientele more influential and more remunerative than Dr. Arne himself could obtain.

But this is only the professional aspect of the experiment; it has nothing to do with the artistic. Perhaps a few years more of study by the side of his master would have made all the difference in the world between the position which he occupies to-day in the list of English musicians and that which he would occupy if he had put in the full term of his apprenticeship. To be sure, if a man has it in him to become a great artist, he will become a great artist in spite of everything. Burney may not have been capable of taking his place among those masters of musical expression, Purcell, Haydn, or Bach, but he might, if he had remained with Arne, and learned all that Arne could teach him, have produced as immortal an anthem as "Rule, Britannia!"

As it was, he learned the manners and customs of high life, and this form of learning he assimilated easily, and never more were they separated from his life; he acquired that mysterious element known as *ton*, and this was a very important branch of learning in the eighteenth century. While living with Fulke Greville and his friends he learned all that was needed to qualify him for mixing on equal terms with what is called "the best society"; he also studied the best means of establishing a clientele of a highly remunerative character—he may even have studied a little music when he had time; but that was all. He acquired the manners of a person of quality, and became qualified to be an excellent teacher of music

and an excellent historian of music, but never a great musician.

It was probably because he learned his lesson of high life so intelligently that he refrained from marrying among its altitudes. He married Esther, the daughter of a worthless nonentity named Sleepe. He had met the lady, not through his patron or any of his patron's friends, but at the house of his brother Richard, in Hatton Garden ; and she had no portion. She had, however, some reputable relations in the City, and as he obtained the post of organist at a City church, he at once set about earning an income as a music-teacher. A man with so many admirable qualities as brought him hosts of friends of the cultivated class, which alone is worth cultivating, could not but be successful. Of course, his friend Greville—their friendship had not suffered by reason of that divider of old friendships, marriage, and Greville, too, had married—recommended him to influential clients, and soon Burney was prospering. Unhappily, however, his health broke down. The doctors ordered him away from London without delay, and the quarter to which he went was determined by the fact of there being a church in Lynn in need of an organist. He applied for the post, got it, and settled in that town in 1751, a year before the birth of his second daughter, who was christened Frances. He had already a son, James, and a daughter, Esther, so that it looked as if the family tradition of increase was about to be followed. The three children that were born to the Burneys before the third year of their

married life had come to an end were followed by three others before the husband's health had improved so greatly that he was able to return to London.

He was for nine years at Lynn, and success pursued him there as it had done in London. His manner made him welcome at all the best houses in the neighbourhood, and so extensive was his practice that he was obliged to keep a horse to carry him to give lessons far and wide. A person cannot fail who has all the qualities that make for success. The man who could utilise the time spent in the saddle in the translation of Metastasio by the aid of a dictionary was not the man to fail in any enterprise to which he addressed himself. He contemplated writing his *History of Music* even in those days, and began collecting material for this achievement from all sources, perfecting himself in several languages while traversing the Norfolk highways.

But he was not neglecting the higher aims of his art : he composed several church pieces of great merit, and an *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*—a favourite exercise among eighteenth-century musicians. It was the success of this particular composition when performed at Ranelagh that caused him to make up his mind to run the chances of a relapse from the good health which he enjoyed at Lynn by returning to London. He took this step in 1760, having been, as we have said, in Norfolk for nine years. It is interesting to know that his eldest son, James, had for some years the benefit of education at the free school of Lynn, at which one of the masters was



Eugene Aram, the brilliant philologist who was executed for the murder of a man named Clarke. It is well known that a novel was written around this hero by Bulwer Lytton during the period of the apotheosis of interesting criminals by some English novelists, who made themselves the exponents of sentimental immorality. But the story formed the subject of a poem by Thomas Hood, in whose verses a subtle psychological vein more than redeems the melodramatic effects. It is quite possible that Hood wrote this masterpiece of the lurid in verse after hearing James Burney—he was then a retired Admiral—give some reminiscences of his deceased master. Burney mingled a good deal in a literary set in his old age, and Charles Lamb referred to him in one of his essays. Hood did so as well in a note to "The Dream," so it is possible that he meant him to be the original of the "gentle boy" who was made the unwilling confidant of the usher. It would be interesting to know if the old Admiral confessed to having read Gesner's *Death of Abel* in his youth. The book was published and obtained an extraordinary amount of popularity in England in 1758, the year when Burney was under Eugene Aram and the year of the arrest of the latter. However this may be, we do not think that attention has yet been called to the exactitude of the poet's chronology in this respect.

On the return of the Burney family to London they settled in Poland Street—a locality well chosen as a centre by a fashionable teacher of music. With-

out widening his circle by more than a street or two, he might have taught in some of the greatest houses. Not so far from Dr. Burney's own house stood a ducal mansion as well as the town houses of some peers of lesser degree; but it would seem as if the carpets had scarcely time to be laid down before he was in attendance upon people sufficiently far away to make it necessary for him to pass the greater part of the day in hackney coaches. His reputation as a teacher of music was as wide as that of Sir Joshua Reynolds as a painter of portraits, the result being the same in the one case as in the other. Reynolds's diaries let us know how enormous was the pressure upon his time by his numerous sitters, but Burney does not seem to have had time even to keep a diary. He was engaged from morning to night within a year after his return to London, and his good wife was left to look after the five children that remained at home—James, the eldest son, had already become a midshipman in the Royal Navy, and shortly afterward was appointed to serve under Lieutenant Cook on those adventurous voyages to the South Seas which for many years remained traced upon all terrestrial globes as well as school atlases.

All the children, with the notable exception of Fanny, showed considerable aptitude for learning. All were bright, intelligent, and attractive—the eldest daughter especially on account of her musical talent. Before she was ten she played the harpsichord with the skill of an artist, and a little later her sister Susan was able to join her in duets when the “forte-

piano " took the place of the older instrument. Fanny was the only one in the household who did nothing but—observe. At eight she did not even know her letters, and though as a matter of course she was teased by the others, neither her father nor her mother thought it necessary to urge her on, though the former made some attempt to cure her of that shyness of manner with which she was afflicted. He was not so successful in this as he was in other undertakings. She remained diffident almost to a morbid degree until the end of her life. The truth appears to be that he was so busily occupied from hour to hour that he had little time for studying the temperaments of his children ; and it never occurred to him that there might be possibilities of good results following the silent observation of the girl who sat apart from the others and seemed longing for a chance to escape from the room where they were displaying their varied talents.

And if this is true about the father—if he was too busy to be able to study Fanny—assuredly it may be equally true that she was too busily occupied observing everybody to have time for any other employment. She was dumb because she was listening to all that was being said around her. She was shy because it gave her greater satisfaction to listen to others and draw her own conclusions from their talk than to take part in it. And so she remained—and we have to be thankful for it—an observer of extraordinary power—a chronicler of character as penetrating as any that ever lived—a recorder of the sayings of



others with that consummate skill which enables us to appreciate the exact inflection of their phrases. This is what she was, and all unconsciously she was training from her childhood up to her womanhood for the place she was to hold in the literature of her country.



A PLEASANT HOUSEHOLD





## CHAPTER III

### A PLEASANT HOUSEHOLD

MRS. BURNEY died the year after the return of the family to London. The blow must have been a terrible one to her husband, for, being an eminently practical man, he could not but ask himself what was to be done with the five children, the eldest of them only ten years of age, who had been wholly dependent upon their mother in all matters of their daily life. It would be impossible for him, he knew, at that stage of his career, to withdraw from those engagements by which he earned bread for his children and to devote himself to their up-bringing. But if the fact of his being a practical man made him estimate the force of his bereavement more clearly than a sentimentalist would have done, it also prevented him from being bewildered by the problem which was forced upon him. He seems to have come to the conclusion that the management of the household by the confidential servant who had been with his wife to the last would be sufficient for the comfort of all for the time being, for we do not hear that he engaged either a housekeeper or a governess. He had many good friends with wives, and some of them were very kind to the children during the long daily absence of their

father. Among the best of these were the Garricks. There was nothing that the great actor enjoyed more than entertaining children, and at the Burneys' house he had a chance of indulging his fancy to the top of his bent. Such fooling went on in the Burneys' rooms as the world has never known—the fooling of the greatest genius that ever played upon the emotions of men, women, and children at his will. He was probably the greatest farceur that ever lived, and he was certainly the one whose genius was as apparent in his farce as it was in his tragedy. He could do anything he pleased with the people who were before him; their emotions were in his keeping for the time being. Just as he had the men who regarded Johnson with a veneration that was given to no other man of the century in paroxysms of laughter at his imitation of their idol, until between their gasps they implored him to leave off, so for the Burney girls he made such fun as they remembered so long as they lived. And of the delicate duet of comedy with his charming wife there is no need to look for a description in any literary work extant. Hogarth's picture showing Garrick at his desk, his pen uplifted while he waits for the inspiration of a thought, and his wife stealing behind him, making a motion of infinite grace to catch the quill, gives us a scene of such exquisite comedy as could not be conveyed to us by dialogue.

It is quite possible that some of Burney's friends believed that he was to blame for not placing the education of his children in competent hands—that is,





Garrick and his Wife.

*From the picture by Hogarth in the Royal collection.*



in conventional hands—immediately after the death of their mother. Not knowing all that we do regarding at least one of the girls, such people might have been justified in their blame ; but in our mind there can be little doubt that the distinction which Fanny Burney gained as a writer so early in her life was largely due to the influence of the Garricks. It was not by reason of her literary style that she won fame—it would be nearer the truth to say that it was her assumption of a literary style that well-nigh neutralised the fame that she had won. No ; it was in her appreciation of comedy, of character, and of situations that her power lay, and we are convinced that, whatever her original bent may have been, it was the influence of the Garricks that was responsible for the development of her powers. The greatest of actors have lamented the transient effect of their art, taking it for granted that when they have made audiences laugh or weep that is the end of all—that no permanent evidence of their art survives them. We believe that they are wrong in their assumption. The influence of a great actor—a vivid interpreter of passions of life and the emotions of men and women, and the tragedy as well as the comedy of humanity—is so far-reaching that the end of it all is not in sight. Not only does he influence materially workers in sister arts, suggesting subtle phases of character and psychology of which even the dramatist himself was unconscious, but he also influences the audiences of his epoch, preparing them for the appreciation of the work of those artists, literary and



pictorial, who have come under the spell that a vivid interpretation of some phase of feeling or thought weaves about an intellectual mind.

No opportunity was lost by Fanny Burney at the most receptive period of her life of witnessing the incomparable art of David Garrick; for when he came to the house in Poland Street, and afterward to that in St. Martin's Street, for an hour's sublime fooling with the children, he usually brought with him an invitation to his wife's box for the evening performance; and, knowing what an observer was Fanny, it may be taken for granted that, between the private and the public performances of Garrick, she obtained such a grounding in the elements of comedy as stood her in good stead when she began to write. It is on record that, on returning from the theatre where Garrick had been playing, she was accustomed to invent new speeches for the characters, and deliver them after the manner of the great actor. A better training for an aspiring novelist could not be imagined.

And thus it was that Fanny Burney, the backward child of a forward family, was educating herself so as to be on a level with her brilliant sisters, who jingled out their duets on the harpsichord for a year or two, and then were heard of no more except as the mothers of children and as the sisters of the author of *Evelina*.

She had need to educate herself, for her father showed no particular haste in undertaking such a duty in regard to her. When it came to a question, a few years later, of two of the girls going to school

in France, it was Esther and Susannah who were so favoured. It has been seriously suggested by a biographer that Burney—whose wife, though descended from an exiled Huguenot family, was a Roman Catholic—feared that the girl had leanings toward that faith, so that when she found herself in Catholic France she might feel herself constrained to join the Church of the country. We cannot for ourselves believe for a moment that he had any fears for Fanny that he might not have entertained quite as reasonably in respect of the other girls. We feel that the truth is that he regarded Fanny as the dull one of the family, and he believed that the money which her schooling would cost him would be very much better spent upon the brilliant girls than upon the dull one.

We fear that there is no denying the fact that Burney had no belief in the ability of Fanny, though in later years he followed the example of so many fathers of sons and daughters who have developed into geniuses, in recalling imaginary premonitions of their early promise. He was able, with the accommodating memories of such persons, to recollect several incidents of her tender youth that convinced him that she was going to turn out an astonishment to the whole circle. He certainly acted so as to increase the force of the astonishment when it should come about. For it would be hard to deny that if a young woman, from whom are withheld the most ordinary methods of learning to read and write, leaps into fame as a writer, she astonishes her friends more than she would if she had been allowed the means of acquiring

these accomplishments. He said a long time afterward that he knew her "natural simplicity" made her independent of any teaching. It would require a plentiful supply of this quality on the part of his confidants to enable them to accept such an explanation of behaving as if he regarded Fanny as a dunce.

But her education was in safe hands. The Garricks had begun it by stimulating her imagination, and it did not take long for her to perceive that if she meant to do justice to the new dialogue she was inventing for the characters she had seen represented on the stage, it would be absolutely necessary for her to learn to read and write. She had overcome the difficulties incidental to both reading and writing by the time she was eleven, but she was really composing in prose and verse before she could write. She had devised a scheme of hieroglyphics which served her purpose very well, and preserved the secrets which they embodied much more efficiently than Mr. Pepys's shorthand did his confessions. When she was able to read, she spent most of her spare time in her father's library; but the evidence of all that she did in that room tends to the belief that she read the books, not for the pleasure that they gave her, but for the sake of criticising them. Not of her may it be said, as it is of so many writers who have enriched their country's literature, that the library door was the entrance to a new world—a world of wonder and delight. She was not a great lover of books, even when she had taught herself to read, and although she read a good deal, she never



acquired the reading "habit." In her day there was no encouragement for girls to read ; the tendency of their parents or guardians was in the other direction, and the other direction was termed industry. Plain sewing, running and felling, herring-boning, darning—these were the simpler forms of industry ; the higher accomplishments were tambour work, the making of paper flowers, and the working of figures in silk on canvas, the heads being afterward painted on paper and stuck upon the waiting worked shoulders with paste. Girls were not encouraged to improve their minds ; they were encouraged only to become adroit sempstresses.

Fanny Burney may have been a good needlewoman ; she never was a good reader. But really, considering the amount which we hear she wrote between her twelfth and fifteenth year, we cannot see that she had much time to waste over tucks and hems. She seems to have scribbled at every available moment during these years, poems, novels, and plays of a sort, as well as letters and confidential notes meant for her own perusal. And this fact makes all the more remarkable the meagreness of her literary "output" after her first novel attained an extraordinary success. We wonder if there is any other instance on record of a writer's working incessantly and in various channels until one effort meets with marvellous success, and then not producing anything for four years, and, after a second success, nothing more for twelve. Certainly there is nothing more remarkable in literature than the passion for writing

which this girl had at an early age and the apparent distaste she had for it just when she was of an age when most writers are at their best.

But if her father took a very easy view of his duties in regard to her early education, she was fortunate in finding a substitute, whose influence upon her was at all times greater than that of her father. This was a gentleman named Samuel Crisp, who from being at one time a frequenter of the fashionable coffee-houses, as well as of the mansions of some of the most conspicuous members of the peerage, had chosen to live the life of a recluse at an almost inaccessible house known as Chessington Hall. He had been a friend of Fulke Greville, and had been a guest at his house in the country when Burney was Greville's musical companion. Meeting Burney by accident in London shortly after the death of Mrs. Burney, he was invited to the house in Poland Street, and making the acquaintance of the little girls, was quite fascinated by their charm, and established himself on such a friendly footing with them that they called him their "other daddy." It was certainly Fanny to whom he became the most attached, and the departure of her two sisters for France, shortly after their affection had ripened into the "daddy" stage, left on her the responsibility of maintaining the friendship on this basis. Thus began an association of the greatest importance to the girl, and, incidentally, to English literature, for beyond a doubt it was Crisp's influence that caused the impressionable girl to concentrate her literary ambitions,

and instead of dissipating her energies in the form of plays that were not plays and verses that were not poetry, to shape her ideas into the form of a story, the result being *Evelina*. It was also through Crisp that she became acquainted with Mrs. Delany, and it will be seen in due course that this was only a single step from her appointment to which the world owes the Diary of the five years spent with Queen Charlotte. The world is certainly indebted to Mr. Crisp.

His story did not need to be garbled by Macaulay to interest every one who is interested in Fanny Burney. He was a man of sufficient fortune to mingle on easy terms with Fulke Greville and his fashionable friends; and, like Greville and Walpole, he had an artistic bent. All gentlemen of quality in those days were not the rough uncultured wine-bibbers that one would suppose them to be from the frequency of the appearance of this particular type in the fiction and plays of the period. A good many were not only patrons of art and artists, but amateurs themselves in some branches of art. Music was Greville's hobby, the stage in its higher range was Crisp's as well as Cradock's, the "country gentleman" referred to by Walpole, who made more than one respectable failure in drama, twenty years after Crisp had made his first and only failure with a blank-verse tragedy on the story of Virginia, which Garrick was persuaded to produce on the representation of some of the author's highly titled friends. The tragedy was a moderate failure in spite of its distinguished sponsors, and Macaulay tried



to make out—he may actually have believed it himself, though this consideration would not weigh much with Macaulay—that the author incorporated the tragedy of the failure into his own life—that because the world had shown that it did not want his play, he made up his mind to show that he did not want the world. But the truth is that Crisp did not renounce the pomps and vanities of a world that failed to see the merit of his blank verse until he had better grounds for such a renunciation. Whatever chagrin he may have felt when Garrick assured him that the verdict pronounced upon his play was not likely to be reversed by any tinkering at it, it did not prevent him from setting out on a tour through Italy, to collect works of art for a villa at Hampton which he had chosen as a residence. He remained in Italy for a considerable time, and on returning to England, completed the artistic furnishing of his home, and set about entertaining his friends as if no tragedy had ever interrupted the course of his life. Possibly, not half a dozen of his friends remembered against him so venial an indiscretion as the production of *Virginia*. What brought about the change in his life was the real tragedy of life—the building of a house without first counting the cost. He found that he had been a spendthrift on his villa and in his mode of life as a man of fashion; and he had got nothing in return but an attack of gout. He found it necessary to retrench before it should be too late, so he joined his misfortunes with those of a friend named Hamilton, at the secluded

Chessington Hall, a homestead whose history closely resembled that of its owners: from brilliant beginnings it had declined to the humble status of a farm-house. It had, however, one qualification as a residence for any one anxious to retrench—it was, as we have said, practically inaccessible.

Here Samuel Crisp lived for several years, and here he constantly had as visitors Dr. Burney and the members of his family. He liked them all, but beyond a doubt it was to Fanny he was most attached.

She alluded to him sometimes as her second daddy: she might have called him her first, without making her father jealous; for it is certain that Burney perceived from the first how advantageous for the girl was the assumption of paternal duties by his friend. Crisp did everything for her that her father might have done (with less judgment) if his pupils had not been so persistent in demanding his attention, and if his devotion to the *History of Music*, which he was writing, had not devoured every hour that his teaching had spared, after the manner of the locusts and the survivals of the hail in the record of the Plagues of Egypt.

Crisp wrote long letters to her, and encouraged her to reply to them in full. He had seen far more of the world than had her father, and he was a far closer critic of life and character, of literature and art. He had never made tact and geniality the basis of his scheme of living, or he might have been assuccessful as Burney; but the most genial critics are not

invariably the most valuable, and assuredly Fanny learned more from Crisp than she ever did from her father, and no one would have been more ready to acknowledge this, and much more, than her father himself. He encouraged the affection between the two, knowing perfectly well how valuable the influence of Crisp was to a girl of her temperament. It is pretty plain that her diffidence—her malady of shyness—was regarded by all the members of her family as a terrible handicap to her success in life—their idea of success in life not going beyond the reasonable entertainment of their visitors—and Burney must have been more hopeful of her when he found her attracting the attention of such a man as Crisp. He cannot but have felt that under the influence of Crisp she would be “taken out of herself,” and lose that self-consciousness which is the origin of some types of morbid bashfulness, especially on the part of girls. He may even have been led to believe that she might eventually become as clever as her sisters.



**FEELING HER WAY**



## CHAPTER IV

### FEELING HER WAY

FANNY BURNEY had from the first a thorough belief in the wisdom of her "Daddy Crisp," and his bearing toward her at all times fully justified this confidence. He was never didactic in his attitude, and he never wasted his time in giving her that form of advice which was available to her in the headlines of every copybook. When she asked him for his counsel on any matter on which she was in doubt, he satisfied her, and gave her the reasons for his conclusions. He could do so, having taught her to appreciate the value of such reasons. He encouraged her to write naturally, and the success of his efforts in this direction is made apparent in all her letters to him. Never were there more spontaneous or more natural letters written by a girl even to her own sisters. The "daddyship" of Crisp was sufficiently fictitious to allow of her writing to him without the least straining after that filial pose which was considered in keeping with propriety when a girl was addressing her father—an affectation easily leading to the cultivation of hypocrisy—which is observable in so many letters of the eighteenth century, and to a far greater degree in those of the mid-nineteenth, when the cultivation of



hypocrisy was the most important item in the curriculum of the "seminary for young ladies," and when its appearance in the sentiments of a young lady's letter to her parents convinced them that they were getting good value for their money. In all that Fanny Burney wrote to Crisp there is no suggestion of the governess looking over her shoulder. But when Crisp was dead, the novel that she produced suggested that Dr. Johnson, the governesses' model in style, was not only looking over her shoulder, but holding her pen.

It needed all Crisp's influence to save the girl from forming a style that would be a "rubbing" upon her father's. We may be right or wrong in this matter, but it certainly seems to us that it was he who so saved her to write *Evelina*, and the *Diary* and the *Letters*; but *Camilla*, the *Memoir of Dr. Burney*, and, indeed, all that she wrote for publication after the death of her friend, prove that the utmost he could do was to avert, for a time, the danger which he knew threatened her. The best of all literary styles is that which is no style at all, and this Fanny Burney maintained in her correspondence with Crisp and throughout the greater part of her *Diary*.

In writing to her father when she had entered the Queen's service, on the subject of the *Diary-Letters*, she remarked, very pertinently, by way of excusing their naturalness, that "these kind of compositions lose all their spirit if they are too scrupulously corrected." We know that this was something she had learned from Crisp in the course of their correspond-

ence : she certainly would never have learned it from her father. The excellence of Crisp's advice may be gauged from his remarks on the subject of writing a comedy. Never more clearly were the differences between the exercise of the spirit of comedy through the medium of a novel and through the medium of a play described. When he wrote, Fanny had just published *Evelina*, and it seemed that all England was talking about that performance. But quite a number of her friends were urging on her to set about writing a play, and she told Crisp of this. At once he gave her within fifty lines the most complete *résumé* that could be imagined of the art of play-writing as differing from the art of novel-writing. If all novelists who hope to become playwrights would read his letter, there would be fewer failures on their part to achieve their end with distinction.

But it was not Fanny only who found Mr. Crisp's friendship extremely helpful. Six years after the death of his wife Esther, Burney married a second time. There is no reason to believe that he found that his house was not being properly managed, or that he had not confidence in his own ability to look after his daughters, even when they had left school. He made no excuse for an act that needed none ; but on the other hand he did not make a fuss about its accomplishment. He married very quietly—in fact, it would bear to be termed secretly—the widow of a man whom he had known at Lynn, named Allen, but having confided in Crisp, he went with his wife for a short honeymoon to a farm-house, taken for them

by his friend and confidant, within easy walking distance from Chessington.

How long it was intended that the secret should be kept, or what reason there was for keeping it at all, we do not know, for it does not appear that either the young Allens—of whom there were several—or the young Burneys were otherwise than pleased at the incident, when it was made known to them and their friends. Fanny and her sisters welcomed their step-mother when she was brought to the Poland Street house, and they had every reason for doing so. She was a fully-trained wife and mother, and it is certain that her arrival was of great use to them in every way, as she was just the sensible, clear-headed woman that a family of clever girls need for their head.

Fanny was at this time on the verge of sixteen, and she had maintained her love of writing, which began, as has been said, several years earlier. She had started her Diary, and she had been accustomed to retire from the plain sewing of the parlour to the writing-desk of the garret at every opportunity, there to spend her time composing scenes of stories, pathetic as well as humorous, for the entertainment of her sister Susan. Only in this sister did she confide; and until the coming of the new mother, no one in the house seems to have minded how she was amusing herself upstairs. But, of course, such a secret could not escape the observing eyes of the new inmate of the house, and when Mrs. Burney learned that she was writing both in Poland Street and also in a summer-house at the residence at King's Lynn in-



herited by Mrs. Burney from her late husband, she thought it time to interfere before the habit should get such a hold upon the girl as to make it impossible for her to throw it off. She tried to keep her fully employed in other matters, or to effect a compromise in regard to literary work by getting her to transcribe the hundreds of pages of notes which Burney had amassed in view of the publication of his *magnum opus*.

Good Mrs. Burney had her own ideas respecting the writing of fiction by young women of sixteen, or indeed by any woman, young or old, and these views did not differ materially from those which were held (with good reason) by all sensible parents in her day. A novel was reckoned a disgraceful thing, and it usually was. Success alone could make novel-writing something to be proud of, and Mrs. Burney had no reason to believe that the girl who had been committed to her care would find such a passport to purification. She had come upon some of her scribblings and was not particularly struck with their merit. She advised—and the advice of even the best of stepmothers should be equivalent to a command—the girl to burn all that she had written, and the girl records that she obeyed. A bonfire was made of many incipient romances and quite a number of scenes of humour, pathos, and wisdom, and we may be pretty sure that such a holocaust was not the means of depriving the world of much that it would not willingly let go.

Such an act on the part of a young writer is as prudent as it is artistic. As a refining agency, a fire

has for long been held in esteem, and it is especially so in the case of the burning of one's early efforts: if there is any precious metal among them, one may be assured that it will survive a seven times heated furnace. It was so at any rate in the case of little Miss Burney's bonfire: among her MSS. had been one that set forth the adventures of a young lady named Caroline Evelyn, and this was the study in charcoal for that finished work, *Evelina: A Young Lady's Entrance into the World*. Whatever was worth remembering in the early story did not leave the mind of the author, and by the time the story forced itself to be written, so to speak, it had become a very different thing from the callow Caroline Evelyn that had occupied her spare time in the Poland Street garret or the cabin summer-house at Lynn.

But the maturing process took time, and what with the writing up of the Diary and the writing up of her father's notes for the *History of Music*, to say nothing of attending to the many duties of the household, which included the entertaining of many visitors of distinction, it can easily be understood that little Miss Burney, the exhibitor of the *auto-da-fé* just described, had in her mind in proper order every character and every incident in the book she wrote, long before a line of it was put on paper. Not for some years still had she a chance of sitting down to the mechanical part of her work; but in such a matter, and in the circumstances of such a case as hers, every day's delay is a gain so far as the finish of the work is concerned. She was, we may take it

for granted, overflowing with her cherished story that had escaped the violence of fire, but we do not hear of her complaining of the drudgery imposed upon her in the household. She knew that she had not much to complain of, and she was never given to complaining. She went on transcribing the material for the *History of Music* until her father, having taken his degree of Doctor of Music at Oxford in 1769, and a new house—it was in Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, and one of its most delightful points was that the windows afforded a fine view of the northern hills of Highgate and Hampstead; indeed, a contemporary print of Queen's Square suggests that it was surrounded by mountains—set off on a six months' tour through France and Italy to "verify his quotations" and obtain further material to keep his amanuensis fully employed.

Mrs. Burney showed what a good manager she was by taking advantage of her husband's absence to effect the removal from Poland Street to Queen's Square. This was in the year 1770, when Fanny was eighteen and her education completed. We hear nothing about its ever having been begun, for, after his second marriage, her father seems to have abandoned his intention of giving her and her sister, who had been left at home, the same advantages as had been enjoyed by the two who had been educated in France, and he did not formulate any other scheme to take its place, though Fanny was expected to acquire a knowledge of French from Susan. Every one knows what a scheme of tuition of one sister by



another of about the same age really amounts to ; and it does not appear that Fanny got more than a colloquial smattering of the language from Susan. The two sisters were greatly attached to each other, and they probably spoke a little French together when they were alone ; but such education as it was, Fanny had to be satisfied with it, while her sister Charlotte was sent off to a fully qualified seminary at Lynn.

Fanny was doubtless quite satisfied with the arrangement. Girls of the age that she had reached are not generally exorbitant in their demands for education. She had no extraordinary craving after knowledge ; she never had much, and she got on very well with what she picked up. She had all through her life a vast respect for learned people, and a large number of them had a vast respect for her ; but she was never otherwise than what would be called to-day an uneducated young woman, by such persons as accept the curriculum of the school-room as the criterion of education. More than once she found herself surrounded by the full strength of the blue-stocking set, and she had good reason to feel terrified. She had a wider public than any of them, and she was, as a writer, infinitely more brilliant ; but had the most ignorant of them subjected her to the examination of a class-room, she would soon have betrayed what an excellent reason she had for feeling terrified in such company. The Queen was a tolerably ignorant woman, but when Miss Burney, the celebrated writer, came into her

presence nightly, Her Majesty must have begun to have no small opinion of herself and of her own scholarship. Now and again the Diary gives us a hint in this direction ; the Queen wanted to talk with her upon a literary topic of which Fanny had never so much as heard, or about an English poet of whose poems she had never read a single line. Luckily, Miss Burney's eyesight was very bad, or she might have felt hurt at the way the Royal eyebrows must have risen when she heard that the most popular English writer had never read the ballad of *The Gaberlunzie Man*.

But whatever mortifications she may have been subjected to owing to her defective reading and her lack of book-learning, we do not find that they materially interfered with the satisfaction she had in dwelling upon all that she managed to achieve in spite of her deficiencies in these directions ; and whatever twinges of conscience her father may have felt at his neglect of her in favour of his other children were more than neutralised by his delight at her triumph.

And the hour of her triumph was at hand.





6

**THE SPIRIT OF COMEDY**



## CHAPTER V

### THE SPIRIT OF COMEDY

DR. BURNEY returned from his six months' tour with plenty of material for a book which he meant to be quite independent of his *History*; and he hastened to Chessington to write. It was only natural that the one in the family who was known to have a liking for scribbling should have pointed out to her how providential was the chance that was now before her of exercising her genius in a perfectly legitimate channel, diverting it from the course in which it had shown a tendency to flow; here was her chance of gratifying her ill-ordered love for scribbling—her father's MS. Clear copies of it had to be made, and she was plainly the one to make them. She went to Chessington when her father was ready for her, and these literary labours kept her fully employed until the book entitled *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* was ready for the press. It was published in the middle of June, 1771, and while his name was still before the booksellers, he produced a smaller work which he also meant to be supplementary to his *History*.

As soon as his winter teaching was over the following year, he started on a musical tour through



Germany and the Netherlands, remaining absent until the December gales had set in, making the Channel crossing both hazardous and disagreeable. He was exceptionally unlucky in this way. The passage to England was so bad, and he suffered so greatly from its effects, that he could not leave his berth in the cabin, and as the boat could not be delayed to await his convalescence, he was treated on the homœopathic principle, and given a similar experience to counteract the effects of the first. Carried back in a storm to Calais and then once more to England, he was for some months forced to dictate to Fanny—her sisters relieving her occasionally—the remarks which he meant to embody in a new volume. But the moment he was able to travel—by land—he posted to Chessington, taking Fanny with him to complete the work.

By the time they were able to return to London Mrs. Burney, who was undoubtedly the masterful person that she needed to be, had purchased the house which must ever be associated with the most interesting chapters of the history of the family, quite apart from the *History of Music*. A defect in the title of the Queen's Square house prevented the family from taking possession of it as they intended, and they must have been rather disappointed at the substitute which was offered to them. The house was—and still is—in St. Martin's Street, a narrow and inconvenient lane on the east side of Leicester Square. Its immediate surroundings were almost squalid; and though moderately roomy, it was cer-

tainly greatly inferior to the house in Poland Street—immeasurably inferior to the one in Queen's Square. In the estimation of the practical Mrs. Burney, however, its situation as a centre of the music-teaching industry far outweighed its lack of picturesqueness and the view of the hills that went with Queen's Square; and in the eyes of Dr. Burney, the fact that it had once been the residence of Sir Isaac Newton went far toward consecrating it. The tiny observatory still remained upon the roof. Burney was something of an astronomer himself, and his first wife had made some progress in the science—a good deal more than could be placed to the credit of Fanny, who, in referring to a pamphlet on *Comets* written by her mother, confused Halley's with another—so that there can be no doubt that he was delighted to live in the rooms that the great Christian philosopher—that is how Dr. Burney would have qualified the former tenant—had once occupied, and he possibly arrived at the conclusion that the time had come for him to give more attention to the best paying side of his profession than he had thought necessary to bestow upon it during the previous two years.

The family settled down in St. Martin's Street. Burney's position in the musical world was consolidated by his literary work and by some compositions of a classical type which he had produced since Oxford gave him his degree. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society, and if he could only have become Leader of the King's Band, the summit of his ambition would have been reached. He had surrounded

himself with friends, most of them of the highest standing. The foreign singers who came to London in the opera season, whose acquaintance he had doubtless made on his continental tours, hastened down the narrow entrance to St. Martin's Street and sang to his circle such songs as some of the more avaricious of them received fifty guineas for singing elsewhere ; and if some of the Grub Street poets of the day failed to announce through the medium of their heroic couplets that, just as the sweetest minstrels of the grove love to make their nests among the gloomiest foliage, so the most exquisite songsters of the town now sent forth their most enchanting strains from a certain nest in a narrow street, all that can be said is that they lost a good opportunity of improving the occasion.

Most delightful indeed are the accounts given by Fanny Burney of the entertainments at this house, and of the many distinguished visitors who passed through the somewhat narrow doorway. The house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, with its painting-room at the back, was just round the corner in Leicester Fields, and he took care that the ornamental iron railing of his stone staircase was curved outward, to the extent of a foot over the end of every step, to prevent the ladies of quality who visited him—a great and notable procession moving decorously to the immortality which he conferred upon them—from being incommoded as to their hoops ; but his staircase, even without this graceful concession to the circumference of the prevailing fashion, was far broader than Burney's ; and there



must have been some little grumbling when a prima donna of generous proportions, wearing a gown of inexorable breadth, had to work her way up to the first floor in St. Martin's Street, where the reception-rooms were situated.

But what a company overcame the restrictions incidental to the small house! The company were usually better than the rooms. Of course Mr. Garrick made himself at home in any corner. He was ready to go on with his fooling—and he went on with it—in Dr. Burney's powder closet, where he watched the wig-dresser at his work and nearly frightened the poor man to death with the changes he made in the expression of his face while looking on. For the benefit of the girls, who were convulsed as they watched him, he went through an imaginary scene between himself and his old schoolmaster, Dr. Johnson, imitating his peculiarities in a way that Miss Fanny learned to appreciate in after years, when she became fully acquainted with every peculiarity of Johnson. But Johnson himself was as honoured and as inconvenient a visitor at St. Martin's Street as he was elsewhere. On two occasions a glimpse of the great man is afforded us in these rooms, and in both we see him eminently Johnsonian, though not eminently the Johnson who was seen by Boswell. The description which Fanny Burney gave of his first visit in a letter to Crisp is more vivid than anything in Boswell's *Life*. The playfulness, the gentle humour, and the tenderness (with the touch of the bear about it) of the honoured guest are shown with

a firm hand. Miss Burney observed everything ; she was not a mere recorder, she was a true observer, and when there was any comedy in the air she responded to its suggestion with the feeling of the floating compass-needle for the approach of iron.

And the comedy spirit was certainly in the air upon the occasion of another visit of Johnson to the house. He came on the invitation of Burney, to meet his old friend and patron Fulke Greville. But thinking that Mr. Greville did not sufficiently appreciate the honour, he turned his back upon him and refused to utter a word of the wisdom that people expected to come from his lips. In despair at the fiasco that was imminent, Dr. Burney begged one of the guests, a distinguished musician, named Gabrielli Piozzi, to oblige the company with a song. Signor Piozzi hastened to the pianoforte, and began to sing in a sentimental style that had many admirers. But another of the guests, a lady named Mrs. Thrale, the wife of the great brewer, thought that some diversion could be made by getting behind the singer and imitating his movements with the extravagance needful to bring out the humour of the parody.

This was certainly not the way to convince people of taste and fashion, like the Grevilles and their exquisite daughter, Mrs. Crewe—who had been painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds as St. Genevieve, and who had been made the subject of a poetical epistle by Charles James Fox—that they had no reason to look coldly upon Dr. Burney's guests, and Dr. Burney perceived this before the thing went on for long. He

tactfully withdrew the vivacious lady and put her on a chair in the corner, so to speak, and the singer was allowed to complete his chansonette and to marry his vivacious mimic a few years later.

Among the other notabilities who attended the informal concerts at the little house were Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose hearing was as bad as Johnson's sight; Edmund Burke, who talked even more brilliantly than he "speechified"; Nollekens, the niggardly sculptor; Colman, the dramatist and lessee of Covent Garden Theatre, and lords and ladies by the score. But the "curiosities" were quite as numerous as the notabilities. Omai, the "gentle savage" of Cowper's poem, who was brought to England by Lieutenant Cook in the ship on which James Burney was a midshipman, came to the house, and the sisters of the young officer sat in amazement while he talked with their visitor in idiomatic Polynesian. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, came also with an ancient lyre. He was a very tall man, and so were some of his stories. It was said of him by a punning unbeliever in his traveller's tales that if Bruce had come from Abyssinia bringing a lyre with him, there was at the lowest calculation one less in Abyssinia. The tall explorer remained one evening to supper—the frugal supper of a family of girls: it consisted of roasted apples and cheese, and so, as one of the family hinted in a letter to Crisp, formed a pleasing contrast to his habitual menu in Abyssinia, which, readers of his adventures need not be reminded, included steaks cut from a live ox.



Another visitor of great stature was not one who told weird stories, but one of whom weird stories were told. He was the notorious Count Orloff, the favourite of the Russian Empress. How so incongruous a guest appeared at the humble home of a simple English music-master is explained: Dr. King wanted him to hear Mützel's duet. Of course the girls looked at him with intense interest, especially since, as one of them confesses, the rumour reached them that he had personally strangled his Imperial Master at the instigation of his Imperial mistress. It may be that a course of music had been prescribed for his savage breast in sympathy with the accepted tradition respecting its charms.

But, equally as a matter of course, the idols of the girls were the foreign tenors. One of them was the gentle Pacchierotti, who came after Fanny had become famous. He had certainly more than a suspicion of a tender feeling for her: if he could have known in what terms she referred to him for long after they had met and parted, he might have been emboldened to confess more than he ever seems to have done of the secret of the interest that the home of the Maestro Burni had for him. Fanny never wrote sentimentally about the gracious Pacchierotti; but among all her references to him, in the *allegretto* vein which she assumed so happily, there may be detected a note of tender feeling that may almost justify our fancy that between her and the charming visitor there was a *rapprochement* beyond that which existed between all the members of the household and the vocalists.

In addition to Pacchierotti there were Rauzzini and Piozzi, both gifted artists and, at least one of them, worthy of esteem ; so that in the season there was never any lack of material for a concert of the highest type available at any house in London ; and it is well known that the chance of hearing good music without paying for it has always been potent in drawing the rank and fashion of the town to its centre. Thus it was that Dr. Burney's personal charm and distinction were supplemented by the irresistible attractions of his accomplished foreign friends, so that it became understood far and wide that for one to confess that one was not a frequenter of this house in St. Martin's Street was to acknowledge oneself outside the best society.

So it was for several years. Dr. Burney became the friend of almost every personage worth knowing ; and he only lacked the appointment of Leader of the King's Band to satisfy his most ambitious hopes. Once he had seen the appointment go past him to a much less able man, and he seems to have made up his mind that so gross a miscarriage of patronage should not occur again.

Meantime, he took the gifts that the gods provided, and awaited with philosophy the bestowal of that which he trusted the King would provide, when he had the chance. He published a portion of his great *History of Music*, and when this was done he had good reason to feel that he had established a claim to Royal favour beyond the power of any rival's competition. The solid merits of the work—the ex-

haustive technical knowledge it displayed, the learning and the mature judgment to be found in every chapter—caused it to remain for long a standard work. It may also be remarked that the ponderous style in which it was written—as it appears to us nowadays—added to rather than diminished from its scholastic value in the estimation of his contemporaries, whose highest exponent of literary style was Dr. Johnson. The baleful influence of Johnson is apparent in the *History of Music*, as it is in the countless books published during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and most conspicuously in other works that came from the Burney family.

And then one day his daughter Fanny came to him to beg for his sanction to make an attempt to get published something which she had written. She had not to say what it was that she had written, because he had not sufficient interest in her habitual scribblings to question her on this point. He was not at all interested in the subject of her petition. She had postponed her request until he was at the point of setting out on a visit to Chessington, and, after a laugh and a pinching of her ear, he may have dismissed the whole thing from his mind. Of course he told her that she might publish anything that the booksellers would take from her—he considered himself fully justified in giving his sanction to any enterprise that was so qualified; but she herself made an addition that still further protected the name of Burney from possible obloquy, for she said that she was ready to promise that her name should



not be attached to anything she might offer for publication.

How could he refuse his sanction to so modest an enterprise, and one which he must have believed had about as much chance of being realised as his daughter had of being appointed to the King's Band? If he did not laugh heartily while she was making her petition to him, he must have done so before he got outside the Square. And then he thought no more about it. He did not bother her with questions about her literary work—whether it was in prose or in verse, whether it dealt with matters celestial, like her mother's pamphlet—to say nothing of his own *History*—or with matters as terrestrial as the South Sea lore which she had picked up from her brother. He simply forgot all about the thing; and so his daughter Fanny obtained her father's kind permission to submit to a publisher a book which was read by thousands while his own great *History* was scarcely read by hundreds, and which has since familiarised hundreds of thousands with the name of Burney without a tenth of them being even aware of the fact that a great *History of Music* was written by a learned gentleman of that name.

The story of the entrance into the world of this story of *Evelina* is as interesting as anything in that history of a *Young Lady's Entrance into the World*. It must be briefly told in this place before a reader can appreciate properly the position in the world which Fanny Burney had achieved when she was induced to become a Keeper of the Robes to the Queen.



**THE FIRST STEP**





## CHAPTER VI

### THE FIRST STEP

WE have already suggested that *Evelina* was the residuary legatee, as it were, of Caroline Evelyn, the young lady whose mortal part was consigned to the flames kindled by the wisdom of the stepmother, who had come to hear of her existence as one of a numerous family of bantlings. It was only the mortal part of Caroline Evelyn of Poland Street that was reduced to ashes; the immortal part survived and grew into *Evelina*. The inquisitorial stepmother had done well. But for the timely destruction of the immature Caroline, the author of her being might never have had such motherly regard for her as caused her to develop into the mature *Evelina*. Fanny Burney might have been content to read over the MS. to herself and her uncritical sisters at intervals, and to feel that she had done well; but when the pages were burnt, she found that the idea which had prompted them was alive, and determined to assert its existence and its claims to live.

We know from her reply to Crisp's searching criticisms upon the MS. of a portion of *Cecilia* which she submitted to him that she was a deliberate—we might say a cold-blooded—composer of

a "plot." She had before her the various scenes through which it was to be developed and the various characters who were to play a part in its development; she did not merely sit down to her desk and trust to the inspiration of the moment. In this way we imagine she must have composed *Evelina*, so that she and her novel reached maturity together. To talk, as some critics have done, of this novel having been written when she was seventeen is quite as absurd as to talk of it as not having been written till she was twenty-five. The truth is that it was being written from the time she was sixteen until she was twenty-five—a scene here and there, the sketch of a character now and again, a situation with some comedy in it when she felt in the mood, and one with a touch of sensibility in it when in another mood. It is "shot" with the varying moods of a girl, and they were the moods of Fanny Burney; hence its power to convince a reader of its truthfulness to nature. It is pretty certain that, like all authors who have plenty of time to compose but little time to write, she had the whole story in her mind before she set about the work of arranging and connecting her jottings so as to bring them into focus for a reader. The time she spent over it, even when the copying stage had been reached, was not sufficiently great to arouse the suspicions either of her stepmother or her father. But, of course, it would have been impossible for her to pursue her work without arousing the suspicions of her sisters. Suspicions? Her sisters





Frances Burney.

*From the picture by her cousin, E. F. Burney.*



would have found out all about it before they had time even to suspect anything. She knew this, and so she confided in them at once that all the time she spent writing was not given to her Diary or her letters, but to the composition of a story which might be called a novel; and on this account it was absolutely necessary, she must have convinced them, that not a word of the matter must reach the ear of the heads of the household. They had all heard the word "novel" whispered by their elders, and had been instructed in the belief that while it was bad enough for any girl to read a novel, it was criminal for one even to entertain the thought of writing a novel. That was the idea which prevailed in the eighteenth century, and to even a greater extent in the earlier part of the nineteenth. Novels were referred to by the pastors and masters of young people pretty much as the "penny dreadful" is referred to by police-court magistrates nowadays, and they were read by young ladies with just as great avidity as the "Deadwood Dick" series is by the boys of the public school and those of the Board school. Of course they were read surreptitiously by the young ladies, but there was scarcely a sofa cushion in a household of girls that did not conceal a contraband volume while the papa and mamma were in the room.

It was the circulating library that enabled the young ladies to snatch these fearful joys at a small expense. A young lady's pocket-money was never large enough to allow of her paying the twelve or



fifteen shillings which the four or six volumes of a novel cost—when it did not run to eight—but a few pence enabled her to smuggle into the house by such means as her ingenuity might suggest the latest of these productions. Hence we find that the satire of that guardian of polite morality, the eighteenth-century playwright, is so frequently directed against the circulating library. Sheridan was one of these satirists. It will be remembered that in *The Rivals* he shows Lydia Languish in league with her maid Lucy for the procuring of certain volumes through such an agency of distribution. And yet there is scarcely one of the plays of Sheridan, Tobin, Kelly, Cumberland, or Colman, that does not contain dialogue that would not be tolerated in a modern play; and there was not a parlour in which topics were not discussed in the presence of young ladies that, if introduced into the free-and-easy drawing-room in like circumstances to-day, would cause even the most loose-laced to frown. The element which is termed “the robust” by writers on the eighteenth century was not supposed to enter into such books as were thought suitable for a young lady’s reading: it was merely confined to the conversation constructed in the young lady’s presence and to the plays which she was taken to see. But there was really nothing that should surprise us in this arrangement of the objectionable and the unobjectionable, for any day of our life we may see in one column of a newspaper a grave indictment of a novel in which may be found

—if one reads it with one's eyes open for such things—a suggestion of a fictitious impropriety, and in the next column a full report of the blunt cross-examination of a witness in a case of unnamable indecency which happens to be running its course in the Law Courts.

But the anomaly flourished; and the novel of the eighteenth century seemed to exist in order to afford the coarse-mouthed heads of households an opportunity of striking a blow on behalf of purity by prohibiting its appearance under their roofs. To call a young woman a novel-reader was to go far in indicating her worthlessness, so what could be thought of the young woman who wrote novels? We may be quite sure that if Dr. Burney had had the least notion that the work which his daughter asked his leave to try to get published was a novel, he would never have given his sanction to such an attempt. Macaulay had more of his ill-considered censure of Dr. Burney for the apathy which he showed in regard to the publication of *Evelina*; though happily, he says, it had no worse consequences than to deprive his daughter of the £1,200 or £1,500 which she would have made by the book! Why, if Burney had not been apathetic the book would most likely never have been published at all. He would certainly have joined with his wife in condemning his daughter's taking any step that would furnish the circulating libraries with material for carrying on their detestable traffic and go far to destroy her own chances in life.

Fanny Burney herself was fully aware of the bad name that attached to the writing of novels. She certainly had never read one without the sanction of her father or his wife. The Royal Princesses were not allowed to read even those that passed as innocent unless they had first asked the Queen's leave, and this Royal parent of the Prince Regent and of more than one daughter who was associated with a scandal, told Fanny with her own lips that when she heard that Fanny had written a novel she was greatly prejudiced against her, in spite of Mrs. Delany's being prepared to give her a clean bill of health.

It is necessary that these facts concerning the status of the novel during the latter half of the eighteenth century should be borne in mind if we are to estimate aright the step that Fanny Burney had made up her mind to take, not, we are sure, without many misgivings. She knew that she need not go to her father for counsel on the matter; and she bound over her brother and sisters to secrecy when, to anticipate their discovery of the truth, she confided in them; and loyally did they keep their trust.

When she thought that she had written enough matter to make two volumes, and had copied it out in a feigned hand which she had cultivated for the purpose, this tyro in the science of tergiversation wrote to Dodsley, the well-known bookseller, a letter of a mysterious character, unsigned, inquiring if he would be prepared to consider the publication of two volumes of the work immediately and the remainder after the lapse of a year. But Dodsley, who, like



many another business man, did not understand his business, refused to treat with any author who refused to disclose his name. This was a blow to the arch-conspirator and her confederates—for the sisters and brother were deep in the plot—but after a consultation they resolved to apply to Lowndes, of Fleet Street, another eminent bookseller, in the same strain; and they were soon pleased to find that all the trade were not so punctilious as Dodsley. Mr. Lowndes did not refuse to do business at the outset; he wrote offering to read the MS. It was sent to him at once, and very amusing it is to hear of these youthful traffickers in the forbidden seeking to mystify the innocent tradesman by disguising Brother Charles, so as to make him seem older, when carrying the precious parcel to its destination. In due course, a reply was received from Mr. Lowndes in which he expressed his interest in the work, but declined the suggestion of the author to publish it in an incomplete form. He requested the remaining volume to be sent to him; and it was when she had put the last touches to the final volume—it occupied her another year—that she applied to her father, as already stated, for permission to publish the “something” which she had written.

In a surprisingly short space of time a letter arrived from Lowndes, addressed to “Mr. Grafton, at The Orange Coffee House, in Orange Street”—the daring young gang of conspirators had been mindful of all the tedious technicalities of the Post Office in regard to names and addresses—and in it Mr.

Lowndes expressed his approval of the work and showed the extent of his approval by an offer to purchase it for twenty pounds and to publish it at his own expense! It was worth being in a conspiracy that was attended by such splendid results. Twenty pounds for not more than four or five years' casual work, including the making of fair copies—of course the verdict of a council of the executive of the inner circle of the brotherhood was that the offer should be jumped at before there should be time to reconsider it. They jumped at it; and their fears regarding its rescission proved groundless. Good Mr. Lowndes made no unworthy suggestion that his magnanimity had been the result of a miscalculation: he made no attempt to back out of his bargain even after he had spent quite a small fortune—a very small fortune, perhaps as much as £50—over the printing and binding and the many other incidents of the publication, and had, after striking a business man's balance-sheet, found that he had made over £1,000 by the transaction!

No; Mr. Thomas Lowndes, of 77, Fleet Street, found that he had made a very good bargain for himself. But if Lord Macaulay actually believed that, had Dr. Burney busied himself making the bargain on behalf of his daughter, the thousand pounds would have gone to her rather than to the publisher, he must have had in his mind cases of enterprise of eighteenth-century booksellers in respect of untried authors which are quite unknown to the majority of students of the period—or, for that matter,

any other period. It would have thrown a flood of light upon the relations between authors and publishers of the period if Macaulay had confided in his readers on this point—giving them a list of the writers who succeeded in selling their first book to a publisher or anybody else for something between the £1,200 and the £1,500 of which he says Dr. Burney deprived his daughter by allowing her to do her own bargaining with Lowndes.

Little Miss Burney at the age of twenty-six, with twenty pounds in her hand as the pecuniary result of spending her spare time in writing a novel, was in a position that a good many other young writers, both before and since, have envied. Mr. Lowndes, of 77, Fleet Street, was not at that moment a man whose position would be envied by most of his confrères in business. To be sure, a year later they were all envying him his possession of the *Evelina* gold-mine; but that is beside the point. The question is the market value of a novel by an unknown writer on the day the MS. is put into the hands of the publisher. Every one knows how extremely speculative is the value of such a work; but every one knows that, whatever the result of the publication may be from the standpoint of money profit, it changes in a moment the standing of the writer: it makes him or her an Author, and that change many thousand persons have at all times in most countries thought well worth effecting by the payment of a considerable sum of money to a publisher. If Mr. Lowndes could have foreseen



his clearing his thousand pounds off *Evelina* he might reasonably be accused of parsimony in offering only twenty pounds for the MS., and Dr. Burney might be accused of a culpable neglect of his daughter's interests in allowing her to accept the twenty pounds; but considering the actual circumstances of the case, we can go no further than to think that Mr. Lowndes was a very fortunate man in getting a property worth thousands of pounds for twenty pounds; that little Miss Burney was a very fortunate young woman in getting twenty solid sovereigns in her little hot hand for the first book she had written, and, *terque quaterque beati*, the public, in that Dr. Burney neglected his daughter's interests in the transaction, so that it was completed before he could forbid it, as he certainly would have done. We have already expressed the opinion that if he had known of her making an attempt to get a novel published—of her doing her best to qualify for the ban that rested on writers of novels as a class—he would assuredly have felt that he would be neglecting his daughter's interests most culpably if he had not put his foot down and prohibited the carrying out of a transaction that would have left his daughter going through the world with the stigma of a novelist upon her. At any rate, if he had not the time to feel this, his good wife would have done the feeling on his behalf, and he would have relied on her judgment, looking on it as a purely domestic incident. We have seen how she assumed the function of the Grand

Inquisitor at the *auto-da-fé* of poor Caroline Evelyn and the other fledglings of her stepdaughter's fancy, and is it to be believed that she would have withheld her hand when the whole question of the girl's future was trembling in the balance? The girl herself knew too well what her parents would have done, had she confided in them on this matter; and so, for the first time in her life, she kept hidden from them a matter of supreme importance, silencing her conscience by the reflection that if any harm came of it, their honoured name would remain without a smirch; and also by the thought that she had obtained from her father a permission of as general a character as the General Confession—ample for conscientious purposes—to take the step to gratify her ambition. It was only a simple step, but to Fanny Burney it seemed a plunge into a deep and troubled ocean; and the waters closed over her head when on the morning of January 29, 1778, at the breakfast-table, her stepmother casually read out of the *London Chronicle* the advertisement that this day would be published in 3 vols. 12mo, 9s. bound, 7s. 6d. sewed, *Evelina; or, A Young Lady's Entrance into the World*.

But her fellow-conspirators had become adepts in the art of dissimulation—hardened in deception by implication. They heard the announcement without flinching—without a movement that might arouse the suspicions of the head of the household. Fanny alone at the table felt the fearful joy of secret authorship; and had the reader's eye been on her, it could

not but have perceived the effect that the advertisement had upon her. Fanny was certainly flushing furiously ; but then she was so bashful by nature that even at the age of twenty-six she must have blushed every hour of the day.

And then no doubt Mrs. Burney bustled about her household duties, after settling the girls comfortably down to their needlework, the author of *Evelina* among them. Mrs. Burney was an admirable house-keeper.



**A BRILLIANT SUCCESS**



## CHAPTER VII

### A BRILLIANT SUCCESS

THE success of a book in the eighteenth century was dependent upon, practically, the same circumstances as contribute to such an end in the present day. We refer, of course, to a book that is issued in the ordinary way, by a writer whose name has not previously been prominently before the public in some connection other than literature. In 1778 a book might with luck obtain half a dozen reviews; to-day one can hardly escape receiving fifty, unless it is a volume of verse, in which case it easily evades any notice whatsoever; but the fact remains the same, the conditions that govern the sale are alike: the book must be talked about in order to sell. Whether the elements that cause it to be talked about are the elements of a good book or a bad book is a question quite apart from the question of success. Exceedingly silly books were talked into success in the eighteenth century just as they are in the twentieth, and exceedingly good books have failed at all times because they never got talked about.

*Evelina* was soon on the way to success. Before it got the first of the three reviews which were given to it within two months of its being published, people



had begun to talk about it, and the point about it that gave all who were disposed to do so a chance of talking was its anonymity. There was something that challenged discussion at the outset—something of far more account as a general topic than any question of literary merit or demerit, and people made the most of it, in spite of the fact that in the eighteenth century anonymous books were far more frequent than they are at the present day. The anonymity of an uninteresting work will not force it to the front as a topic; but should a book be really interesting there can be no doubt that, if the title-page does not bear the name of the author, every reader is stimulated to try to repair the omission and to give a reason for being definite on that point. This is the making of the book's success, more than the simple fact of its being interesting in itself; and Fanny Burney, without doing anything unusual, had hit upon the best way of getting her book talked into a success; having first done her best to make it interesting. Within a brief space *Evelina* was regarded in the most influential society pretty much as a pretty fair-haired foundling might be when brought into the hall of the mansion by the gamekeeper, who has heard it crying under a hedge: every one found it interesting and every one was ready to suggest the name of its parent. Of course, we only know a few of the guesses that were made on this point, but we may take it for granted that when one person was equal to affirming that its author was the writer of the *Bath Guide*, and

another to attributing it to Mrs. Thrale, ladies of quality were attributing it to gentlemen of quality, and Mr. Boswell, without reading it or knowing anything about it, was prepared to announce that its author was Dr. Johnson: but everyone knew the value of Mr. Boswell's judgment on such matters.

But there they were—all talking it into success, just as people, thirty years later, were doing in regard to the anonymous *Waverley*. We hear that the lovely Mrs. Cholmondeley, Mrs. Margaret Woffington's sister Polly, who had married the son of Lord Cholmondeley, talked enthusiastically to Dr. Johnson about the book, announcing her intention of finding out the name of the author if she had to canvass all London for it; and Dr. Burney was sitting at the table while Johnson told all this, and yet he was unable to say the word that would shorten the honourable but somewhat tedious quest on which the lady meant to start. Later we hear that the same charming person had been singing the praises of the book into the ear of Edmund Burke and the ear-trumpet of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and so potent an advocate of it did she prove that they both bought the book, and the one neglected his dinner in order to read it, and the other his night's sleep. Mrs. Thrale probably heard her name suggested as the writer, and so made haste to buy a copy, if only to see whether she should feel flattered or the opposite. She passed on her copy to Johnson, and he, generous as usual to anything that appealed to him, gave it such praise as must have made Mrs. Thrale wish

that she had indeed written it. With Mrs. Thrale's account of how Johnson talked of it, we get a glimpse of the true Johnson—quite a different person from the Johnson of Boswell. He called out impatiently for the second volume, laughing at his impatience and declaring, "I cannot get rid of the rogue." Fanny Burney fills pages of her Diary at this time in recording all the good things people said about her *Evelina*; but there is no suggestion of vanity in anything she records—nothing but the artless delight of a schoolgirl who has won a prize for lawn-tennis or something not scholastic. She is in the highest spirits while she rushes through page after page of her Diary, and she makes us feel that she never had such intense enjoyment in her life as when she was recording the delightful things that people were saying about her book. There is no reticence in any page—no mere hinting that certain people were pleased, but there is certainly no display of vanity, or of that product of vanity, false humility. She does not pretend to be ashamed to repeat the most exuberant praise that was given to the story by the best critics—all is natural, innocent, girlish, delightful to read. She is ready to dance "Nancy Dawson" on the grass plot at Chessington as she had danced it when a girl, with her cap on the ground, her hair streaming down her back, one shoe off and throwing about her head like a mad thing—Crisp's account of this feat appears in a letter to her reminding her of it—but she seems to have contented herself by dancing a girl's jig round the old mulberry-tree on the



lawn. Years afterward, when no doubt they were exchanging opinions on the subject of the delights of an anonymous success, she told this story to Sir Walter Scott and he noted it in his Journal.

And all this time neither her father nor her Daddy Crisp had any notion that the book about which they and their friends were talking was written by her. The story of how the news was broken to them is one of the most interesting of the incidents connected with the publication of *Evelina*.

While the first three editions of the book, consisting in all of 2,300 copies, were being sold off, the author was lying in bed suffering from inflammation of the lungs, and when in May she was able to move to Chessington, she could scarcely walk a dozen yards without support. She recovered rapidly, however, under the influence of the invigorating rumours that were conveyed to her of the stir the book was making in the world. The news even travelled to the house of the recluse at Chessington, and he made some remark about it. Then Sister Susan, one of the original conspirators, brought two of the volumes with her when she paid a visit to Fanny, and Crisp read them, and was so interested that he begged of her, in the presence of Mrs. Burney, to send on the other volume. Fanny felt that she looked self-conscious, and Susan certainly did look foolish. As she sat on the same sofa as Crisp, the author was able to hint to him, by means of a "gentle shove," she tells us, that he was not to pursue the subject. This mystified the old man, but the inquisitorial stepmother was ready

to interpret the hint. "*Evelina*—what's that, pray?" she inquired, "darting forward." Again Mr. Crisp got a nudge, and now, thoroughly perplexed, anxious to avoid getting anybody into a scrape, though he could not see how anything that he had said could compromise any one, he could only mumble that *Evelina* was a novel—"a trumpery novel," got from a circulating library, he supposed. "You have it here then?" continued the watchful mother, "Yes, two of the volumes," replied Crisp. In a moment she turned upon Fanny. "What, had you them from the library?" she demanded. "No, ma'am, from my sister," replied Fanny, "horribly frightened"; and this was the truth, she explains in her Diary, for Susan had bought a set on the day of publication.

So a premature revelation was averted, but Fanny was not quite sure that her stepmother did not think that there was some mystery in the air. But she had no time to dwell upon the point, for Mr. Crisp, when Mrs. Burney had departed, had to be satisfied respecting the meaning of those nudges; but the two girls had by now become adepts in all the arts of tergiversation, and they contrived to put him off the scent of the truth.

A few days later, however, Charlotte wrote acquainting Fanny with the fact that by some means their father had come to suspect that she had written it; for on the very day that Susan and her mother had paid that visit to Chessington, he had sent for a copy of the *Monthly Review* that contained a criticism of *Evelina*, and after reading this "with

great earnestness, put it down, and presently after, snatched it up and read it again. . . . Soon after he turned to Charlotte, and bidding her come close to him, he put his finger on the word *Evelina*, and saying, *she knew what it was*, bade her write down the name, and send the man to Lowndes, as if for himself, and away went William. . . . When William returned he took the books from him, and the moment he was gone, opened the first volume, and opened it upon the *Ode!*"

He saw at once that the ode was addressed to himself. The tears came to his eyes, and through his tears he perceived the truth—that the daughter to whom he had usually alluded as "poor Fanny"—the one child of his who had shown no promise of developing any of the family cleverness—the one whose education had been so completely neglected—the one whose silly bashfulness had kept her at all times far in the background of every scene that took place in St. Martin's Street, was the writer of the book about which all his patrons and, more important still, his patronesses, were talking. His "poor Fanny" was, all unknown to them, the object of the search of Mrs. Cholmondeley, Mrs. Thrale, and the rest of the literary society ladies who had vowed to discover the author of *Evelina* if they should have to go round all London to accomplish this purpose! His amazement must have been great. He must have felt that he was the father of quite a different daughter from any of those whom he had known before. He was like a man who has grown



middle-aged before he has become aware of the fact that he is the father of a grown-up daughter.

The letter which Fanny wrote to him on learning that he had made the discovery is a model of the dutiful letter which might be expected to come from her in the circumstances. It would appear that she wrote it in reply to one which she received from him, and we may be sure that his was also a model in its way. In it he had expressed the intention of revealing the truth to Mrs. Thrale—he was in the habit of going weekly to the Thrales', at Streatham, to give music-lessons to the eldest girl, known as Queenie; and in her reply Fanny declared that the idea of telling this great lady, whom she called in a letter to Susy "the goddess of my idolatry," had quite terrified her. Her fear was that if Mrs. Thrale knew it she might fancy that the Burney family had been in the habit of meeting some very shady types of society, if she took it for granted that the characters in *Evelina* had been portrayed from the author's associates.

She might have trusted to her father's tact to prevent so gross an assumption on the part of the brewer's wife. Had not Mrs. Thrale met both Dr. Johnson and Mr. Greville at the Burneys' house? and surely with such guarantors of respectability the most fastidious lady could have had no fears of the nature of those suggested by Miss Burney.

And happily for the world Mrs. Thrale heard the news without a shudder. She was delighted to be the first of the circle to be made acquainted with

the secret, and she insisted on Dr. Burney's bringing his clever daughter out to Streatham Hall with him. We have a suspicion that so little attention had she previously paid to this particular member of the household, that, had Fanny come into the room, she would not have known her. But Dr. Burney complied with her request, with the result that Mrs. Thrale and her visitors are now the best known of any eighteenth-century circle. Fanny Burney revealed to the world the true Dr. Johnson; for Fanny Burney was a minute observer by instinct, while Boswell's power of observation was about equal to that of a sheep, though as a recorder he produced a book which, if read with a constant remembrance of the character of the writer and a constant acquaintance with his way of looking at things, is invaluable.

The father and daughter met at Chessington for the first time on a footing that quite precluded his alluding to her as "poor Fanny." The last allusion that he made to her in this character was in revealing the great secret to Mr. Crisp; and, as usual, we are indebted to his daughter for a finished vignette of the scene, although she herself only observed it through a crack in the door, so to speak.

"Sunday evening, as I was going into my father's room, I heard him say, 'The variety of characters—the variety of scenes—and the language—why, she has had very little education but what she has given herself—less than any of the others!' and Mr. Crisp exclaimed, 'Wonderful—it's wonderful!' I now found what was going forward, and therefore deemed

it most fitting to decamp. About an hour after, as I was passing through the hall, I met my daddy [Crisp]. His face was all animation and archness; he doubled his fist at me, and would have stopped me, but I ran past him into the parlour. Before supper, however, I again met him, and he would not suffer me to escape; he caught both my hands and looked as if he would have looked me through, and then exclaimed, 'Why, you little hussy—you young devil—aren't you ashamed to look me in the face, you *Evelina*, you! Why, what a dance you have led me about it! Young friend, indeed! Oh, you little hussy! What tricks have you served me!'"

A delightful picture indeed! It brings before us in very few touches the figure of the old man making his faces and shaking his fists at the blushing, laughing girl, who had as little in common with the female novel-writers of the day as her book had with their books, and we feel that Mr. Crisp's gruff playfulness becomes more gruff every moment only in his efforts to keep back his tears.

Fanny Burney never showed herself to be a truer artist than when she was giving the details of a simple scene. In this respect, few writers in English have surpassed her.



**THE REWARDS OF SUCCESS**



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE REWARDS OF SUCCESS

MRS. THRALE had made up her mind to do a little "blanketing" of those of her friends who were seeking to get to the windward of her in the matter of the great secret. She meant to show the enthusiastic Mrs. Cholmondeley that competition with her on a literary question was quite futile. She determined to place herself in a position not only to say that she had discovered the identity of the author of *Evelina*, but that this very person had paid her a visit ; so she laid it on Dr. Burney, when he was leaving her house after making the disclosure to her, to call at Streatham for dinner when he would be carrying his daughter back to town from Chessington ; and meantime she sent the daughter some excellent, if perhaps somewhat premature, advice on the subject of writing a comedy.

Dr. Burney found that he had not overestimated the possible advantages to be derived from the Thrale connection. Excellent father that he was, he showed himself to be at all times ready to make the best of both worlds—the world of the wealthy and the world of the wise ; but where, as in the case of the Thrales, the two were found in combination, a far



more fastidious parent could have no misgiving. He brought the trembling Fanny to the great patroness, and he no doubt felt delighted to think that his acquiescence was twice blest: it conferred upon the seeker after celebrities a distinction that she coveted, and upon the Burney family the privilege of a friendship which he estimated highly, but not nearly so highly as he would have had reason to do, had he been able to look into the future.

"The most consequential day I have spent since my birth," Fanny Burney termed the day of her first visit to Streatham, and so the world is now disposed to term it, after reading the incomparable accounts given in her *Diary of Streatham Hall and its people*. To make any attempt to compress within the compass of a single chapter the pages which she wrote describing with a vividness and a vigour that none of her contemporaries could equal, the days spent at this hospitable house, could only result in failure. We can only repeat that readers are indebted to her for the most faithful portraits available of some of the most notable groups of eighteenth-century personages. And her portraits are all speaking ones: the transcripts which she gives of the conversations around the table in the dining-room—when Dr. Johnson gave any one else a chance of speaking—may, we feel, be accepted without reserve—without the necessity for being strictly "censored" by the reflection that they were made by some one whose point of view was not always the rational one. Every one knows that the

worst of all reports of a conversation is the baldly verbatim one. This is how it comes that such a report of the evidence given in a Court of Law often compels a reader to arrive at quite a different conclusion from that come to by the jury. But when the descriptive reporter deals with the business, although he may only give a few lines to it, he usually presents it in a new light that enables every one to see how the verdict is not only possible but inevitable.

It is this power of judging comparative values that Fanny Burney possessed to an extraordinary degree and that makes her records so valuable. There was a notable gallery of portraits at Streatham painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The wealthy brewer posed as a patron of art in this way, and he did so on the least expensive lines : he got the pictures painted and then left his widow to pay for them. Notable portraits of notable people they were all ; but not more interesting than the literary portraits painted by the observant young woman who was so frequent a guest at the same place.

Mrs. Thrale was greatly attached to Miss Burney, not merely by reason of the prestige which accrued to herself from such a friendship, but also on account of the personal charm of Miss Burney. Undoubtedly Mrs. Thrale liked the worship of such as Fanny, and undoubtedly Fanny continued to worship her whom she had once styled her goddess ; but that there existed between them a friendship founded on something warmer and worthier than the conditions that prevail between the adorer and the adored there

can equally be no doubt. For years after the separation between them had come Fanny Burney referred to it with unfeigned sorrow, and Mrs. Thrale (then Madame Piozzi) was on her side equally grieved that any severance should take place in their friendship, but more especially that it should have happened by reason of an incident that she thought should have had a very different effect.

It would be impossible to refer even in the briefest way to the connection of Fanny Burney with Mrs. Thrale without referring to the origin of the breach in the friendship between the two, which was, we need scarcely say, the second marriage of the elder lady.

On this matter, at the risk of being accused of making the name of Boswell our *Delenda est Carthago*, we must point out that the prejudice which for many years has existed in the minds of general readers of eighteenth-century records against Mrs. Thrale on account of what has actually been styled her foolish second marriage, is largely due to the comments made by Boswell with his usual smirk. He hated Mrs. Thrale at all times, but never with so thorough a hatred as when he found that she had forestalled him with a *Life of Johnson* which, when his own was published, was pronounced by the most competent critics to be the better work; and he never lost an opportunity of sneering at her. But in regard to this particular incident he is to be pardoned, the fact being that he was only following the lead of his great Mentor, who, after being royally



entertained for years by Mrs. Thrale, grossly insulted her in a letter which stands to his everlasting detriment in the eyes of all people whose eyes have not been blinded by Boswell.

Any one who reviews the whole circumstances connected with the second marriage of Mrs. Thrale must see that her choice of Signor Piozzi was a wise one. Piozzi was a man of refinement and culture—the leading exponent of one of the greatest of the arts—a man of the greatest integrity and of unblemished honour. Henry Thrale was far less worthy of respect. He had inherited a brewery from his father, but proved so incompetent a tradesman that he had twice to be rescued from bankruptcy by his wife. He lived the life of a glutton and he died the death of a glutton, and by his will cheated his widow out of the money that should have been hers by every law of equity. On what principle, then, Johnson and the rest of the circle whom she had befriended for years should pronounce her marriage with a man who was a pleasing contrast to Thrale, a disgrace, it is difficult for us to say nowadays. The explanation that is open for the cynical to adopt is that when nothing more was to be got out of Mrs. Thrale they turned round and abused her. So we may hear the expectant nephews and nieces of a wealthy uncle inveigh against him for being so foolish—they regard it as criminal—as to marry and beget a family.

But it shows how enormous was the influence possessed by Johnson when we find that quite a

number of people adopted his view of the marriage. Dr. Burney could hardly, as a musician himself, do more than shake his head at the union of the lady with Piozzi; but he shook his head—when the lady was not looking, so to speak. He did not, however, go so far as to assume such an attitude as made it impossible for him to meet her on quite friendly terms when she returned to England from Italy with her husband. But his daughter had not been quite so far-seeing, there is every reason to believe. She felt shocked that any lady should so far forget herself as to marry a foreigner and a Roman Catholic. That was in the year 1784. In the year 1793 she herself married a Roman Catholic and a foreigner! If any reconciliation was needed between her and Madame Piozzi after their separation, it was easily effected.

Two remarks remain to be made in connection with Fanny Burney and the Streatham influence. The first is that if Mrs. Thrale and she had not parted as they did, it is extremely unlikely that she would have been allowed to enter the service of the Queen. The counsel of Mrs. Thrale would have been adverse to such a move on the part of such a woman. The second is that if Fanny Burney had not been subjected to the overwhelming literary influence of Dr. Johnson day by day when in his company at Streatham, her second and third novels would not have suffered as they did through her attempt—conscious or unconscious—to emulate his style. The exact truth is that *Cecilia* exhibits

Fanny Burney's high-minded emulation of the style of Johnson, that *Camilla* exhibits her parodying the style of Johnson, and that all her other writings, including the *Memoirs* of her father, exhibit her unconscious burlesque of the style of Johnson. Only in her Diaries does she remain almost without change, the natural, pleasant Fanny Burney from whose pen *Evelina* flowed without a thought of style or periods or balance of sentences. And if we are inclined to deplore the effect of the great man's mode of writing upon her, we cannot honestly say that we have succeeded in discerning in anything that she produced under this influence any increase of the more important elements in her writings—thoughtfulness, keenness of characterisation, knowledge of men and women and their impulses and emotions—in short, we fail to discern in her writings any of that wisdom which one might reasonably look for, knowing how close was her intimacy with the great man, and which, were it found, would more than compensate for the degeneration of her technique as an artist through his influence. Crisp had been a far safer guide to her; but what chance had Crisp when the influence of Johnson was at work?

On the whole, then, we are inclined to believe that the actual gain to Fanny Burney from the Streatham intimacy was small, though the gain to the readers of her Diary during the six years that she remained in almost constant association with Mrs. Thrale and her circle of celebrities is great. In the pages of her Diary we are brought in contact with character after



character, all drawn with vigour and liveliness—with subtle touches of comedy and incomparable brightness of dialogue—all the qualities that would have gone to the building of a novel of far greater value than *Evelina* itself. Here one might reasonably say that she was receiving her education in the world of men and women, to fit her for the production of a masterpiece. Previously she had been the bashful, backward girl, seeing only a little world, and almost afraid to notice anything lest she might be thought too bold.

And yet we find that the one book which she wrote in the midst of the mind-enlarging scenes at Streatham and with an eminent critic at her elbow, contains little that is worthy of comparison with the one which she had written by snatches in her closet at home; and the third, which was only produced after an interval of fourteen years—fourteen years of increased knowledge of the world, of association with various characters of amazing interest and of scenes of extraordinary value to a writer—is dull because it is unreal, and unreadable because it is not the work of a woman writing with her own pen, but with the cumbersome stylus of some one quite different from herself.

Nothing more extraordinary than all this is to be found in the annals of our literature; and certainly nothing that proves more forcibly that the best qualification for the production of a work of imagination is imagination—that the best style in which a work can be written is one that is not formed by study or education or taking thought for words or phrases, but that comes naturally when one dips one's pen in the ink

in order to set down what one must set down, without a thought as to what other people will say about it. Fanny Burney became a victim to the thought of what other people would say about her writing, and this habit she acquired at Streatham. So long as she did not think about other people she wrote well.

While she was in attendance upon Mrs. Thrale during the first year after the publication of *Evelina*, she was making the acquaintance of a large number of interesting people, among whom was Richard Brinsley Sheridan; and he expressed his surprise that she had not yet written a comedy. He gave her every encouragement to do so, and she, not knowing how little the encouragement of such a man amounted to, felt flattered. But other people had also been following the lead of Mrs. Thrale in giving advice in this direction, and the result was that, as soon as she found time, she sat down to the serious work of writing a comedy. She called it *The Wiflings*; and several people who read it expressed themselves delighted with it. Crisp was not one of them. Both he and her father agreed that the play bore too close a resemblance to Molière's *Les Femmes Savantes* to allow of its being ever put into the hands of a manager. Dramatists were clearly expected in those days to be scrupulously original; and Mr. Sheridan, who, Fanny thought, would be living in a sort of delighted impatience to produce it, had the news broken to him gently. He had not really forgotten all about it, and he may have been greatly disappointed. The way in which Fanny accepted the



verdict of Crisp in regard to the comedy shows that she had not been spoilt by the success of her novel. "I won't be mortified, and I won't be *downed* ; but I will be proud to find I have, out of my own family as well as in it, a friend who loves me well enough to speak plain truth to me."

But all the time that she was working at her comedy she was thinking out the plot of a new novel, and had even begun to write ; but the distractions of Streatham and the persistence with which Mrs. Thrale compelled her attendance at Brighton, Bath, and elsewhere prevented her from making any great progress with it. She was even neglecting her own family and Mr. Crisp. Her father had good reason to grumble. He was constantly urging her to set to work in a regular way. She was writing at *Cecilia* during the latter part of 1780, and in the February of the next year she was at it while at Chessington, but her heart was not in her work. "I shall always hate this book which has kept me so long away from you," she wrote to Mrs. Thrale ; and in a week or two she had thrown aside her MS. and hurried up to town to be once more with her exacting friend. Before two months had passed she had a valid excuse—if she needed one—for neglecting everything in favour of Mrs. Thrale, for this lady had become a widow, and needed companionship of a congenial nature.

Why Miss Burney should not be able to devote some hours a day to the completion of her novel while at Streatham has never been revealed ; but it was necessary for Crisp himself to go to this Castle of



Indolence and carry her off with him to Chessington—her father's remonstrances had proved quite ineffectual—in order to prepare the novel for the press. But with all, it was well on in 1782—four years after the publication of *Evelina*—when *Cecilia* appeared. The selling of this book was not left in the hands of the author. Her father negotiated for it with a new publisher, and Mr. Lowndes found that even his generosity in sending Fanny another £10 in addition to the £20 that he had originally paid for *Evelina* did not impress Dr. Burney sufficiently to induce him to let the new book go on the old terms. Mr. Lowndes was greatly hurt, and had the impudence to complain of his treatment, which appeared to him the more flagrant inasmuch as he had been compelled to pay over £70 for the plates for his illustrated edition of *Evelina*! Why the fact of his having paid to the artists more than double the price that he paid to the author, after he had first made at least £1,500 by her work, is difficult for one not educated in these delicate questions between authors and publishers to understand. We should rather feel inclined to think of Mr. Lowndes as a poor business man. The supplementary £10 which he had sent for *Evelina* was a very small sprat indeed with which to hope to catch the salmon *Cecilia*.

The new novel was received with enthusiasm on all sides. This is Mrs. Thrale's criticism of it when she was reading it in MS.: "My eyes red with reading and crying, I stop every moment to kiss the book and wish it were my Burney! 'Tis the sweetest book, the

most interesting, the most engaging. Oh! it beats every other book, even your own other volumes. *Evelina* was a baby to it." And it seemed as if little Miss Burney was going to enrich the English language by her contributions to its imaginative literature. There were some people, however, who thought that they perceived the hand of Dr. Johnson in many passages, and Macaulay was not one to blame them; for, writing years afterward, he affirmed his belief that Johnson had actually put some work into the book, although Johnson himself declared most emphatically that he had never so much as seen it before its publication. But it had become the fashion to attribute to Johnson much of the work of other people. The fact is that his style was so easy to imitate that imitators—conscious as well as unconscious—were numerous, and the booksellers found it to their advantage to drop a hint or two as to the great man's having a finger in the pies of some of their authors. And when once a Jack Horner was set looking for plums in the form of interpolated passages from the great literary *chef*, they were sure to be found, especially when the author was doing his best throughout to write so as to be mistaken for Johnson.

In spite of the success of *Cecilia*, however, following on the success of *Evelina*—in spite, too, of the satisfaction of having the handling of such a convenient sum as £250—the price for which it has been made clear the astute Dr. Burney sold the copyright—Fanny Burney did not show any particular eagerness to begin another novel, and she

was thoroughly discouraged in respect of a comedy. She was, however, still a central person in the best society, and seems to have enjoyed that position. She made many new friends, for she possessed in these years a faculty for forming friendships, which was all the more remarkable when one considers that in her girlhood, and even long after, she was extremely retiring. One of these new attachments was the means of changing the whole course of her life. Its object was an old lady of eighty-two, the widow of an Irish clergyman of some distinction, named Dr. Delany.





**AN IMPORTANT CONNECTION**





## CHAPTER IX

### AN IMPORTANT CONNECTION

FANNY BURNEY has done much to rescue the name of Mrs. Delany from oblivion ; for though of an undoubtedly interesting personality, she played no part in the society of the four sovereigns in whose reigns she lived that should cause her to be remembered by posterity. She had been left in her early girlhood in the charge of an aunt who had been Maid of Honour to Queen Mary, the wife of William III., and, subsequently, she was passed on from this aunt to her uncle, Lord Lansdowne, and this nobleman, distinguished by Pope, got rid of her as soon as possible by compelling her to marry a dissolute Cornish squire more than three times her age. On the death of this worthy she went to some friends in Ireland, where she met Dean Swift and the clergyman who afterward became her husband. It was in 1743 that this event took place, and she lived with him at his Deanery in the County Down for a quarter of a century. On his death she was encouraged to take a house in St. James's Place by her dear friend, the Dowager Duchess of Portland, and on meeting Fanny Burney and becoming interested in her, they were soon on the friendliest terms.

Dr. Burney undoubtedly encouraged this intimacy with the old lady, for it was very well known that she was a close friend of the King and Queen, and he knew that no harm could come of such a connection, while its possibilities were many and alluring, being speculative. King George and Queen Charlotte had such an admiration for the old lady that, when by the death of the Duchess of Portland she was cut off from the advantages of a country house, they offered her a cottage close to the Castle at Windsor, and saw that it was ready for her, down to the spice-boxes in the kitchen.

But when Fanny Burney first met Mrs. Delany the Duchess was still alive, and having heard of the author of *Evelina* from Mrs. Delany and actually read *Cecilia* herself, she very kindly appeared in the room when Fanny was paying a visit, and, although she had a rooted distaste for women who dabbled in literature, especially fiction, she felt constrained to compliment Miss Burney upon the excellent moral tone of her last work. She pronounced it, writes Fanny Burney—and here the perfection of her power of observation is shown in a phrase—she pronounced it, “with a solemn sort of voice,” to be “striking, pure, genuine and instructive,” and Fanny felt greatly complimented. She records that the bearing of the great lady was free from arrogance and “free also from its mortifying deputy, affability.”

Her Grace unbent still further when Fanny was able to tell her something about a gentleman named Crisp, who had been regarded in the Duchess's young



Mrs. Delany.

*From the picture by (1715), painted by command of George III.*





days as one of the most delightful members of society, and Miss Burney was cordially invited to repeat her visit.

She repeated her visit almost every week for considerably over two years, and when Mrs. Delany left London and took up her residence in the King's cottage, Fanny frequently came to her pleasant parlour.

And now *Cecilia* had been published for three years and yet the author showed no intention of starting another story. Dr. Burney cannot but have given signs of disappointment at this. He had every reason to do so. He was getting on in years, and it was not to be expected that he should be able to continue his teaching with all the vigour of his best days. Two of his daughters had married, but the famous one did not seem to have had more than an incipient love affair, though Mrs. Thrale now and again professed to be on the look-out for a husband for her. Dr. Burney had every reason for feeling somewhat uneasy in regard to the future; and it may be that he unbosomed himself to good Mrs. Delany, who was such a *persona gratissima* with the King and Queen. However this may be, it was just before the old lady had moved to Windsor that a confidential servant of the King, Mr. Smelt, who had held the appointment of Deputy Governor of the Prince of Wales, showed a desire to become better acquainted with the Burney family. He had met Dr. Burney and Fanny, but had not become at all intimate with them; but now he became a frequent caller at St. Martin's Street; and, curiously

enough, at this time a command came to Dr. Burney to proceed to Windsor in order to inform their Majesties of the particulars of the Handel Commemoration with which he had been associated in the autumn of the year 1784.

Of course Dr. Burney obeyed the command with dignified alacrity. He may, or may not, have been taken entirely by surprise when the King, after discussing Handel with him, began to talk of his daughter Fanny and the secrecy associated with the publication of her first book some years before. Burney was thus privileged to tell the whole story of this transaction, and he reported to Fanny that both the King and Queen had been greatly amused at it.

(It would be interesting to such people as believe that Fanny Burney was sacrificed by her father, to know if, in the Handelian discourse at this time, His Majesty made any inquiry as to the opinion of his visitor regarding the treatment by the great Master of the subject of *Jephtha*.)

A short time afterward Fanny went on a short visit to Mrs. Delany at Windsor, and when sitting quietly with her old friend, the King entered. Now the formality of having his daughters presented at one of the Drawing-rooms had unhappily been omitted by Dr. Burney, so that etiquette forbade His Majesty being made aware of her presence, and she was so greatly overcome at the august intrusion that she quickly made him aware of her absence. A few days later, however, Fanny was in the same room, engaged



in teaching some games to the little grand-niece of Mrs. Delany, while Mr. Dewes, the child's father, and Miss Port, were assisting in the lesson, when the door of the drawing-room opened, and "a large man in deep mourning appeared at it, entering and shutting it himself without speaking."

"A ghost could not more have scared me," continues Fanny in describing the incident, "when I discovered, by its glitter on the black, a star."

It is needless to say that the intruder was the King himself. He spoke to Mrs. Delany, when she had risen to meet him, and when Fanny was "trying to slide along the wall out of the room," he asked of the old lady in a loud whisper, "Is not that Miss Burney?" and "on her answering, 'Yes, Sir,' he bowed, and with a continuance of the most perfect good-humour, came up to me."

He addressed a remark to her, but she was too much overcome by the honour to be able to make herself intelligible in her reply, and His Majesty, perceiving this, began to converse with Mrs. Delany on the unfailing topic of all their healths. His tact and Miss Burney's own sense of comedy relieved the situation. She has set down all that came into her mind at the moment. Every word shows what an artist she was :—

"It seemed to me we were acting a play. There is something so little like common and real life, in everybody's standing, while talking in a room full of chairs, and standing, too, so aloof from each other, that I almost thought myself upon a stage, assisting

in the representation of a tragedy—in which the King played his own part of the King ; Mrs. Delany that of a venerable confidante ; Mr. Dewes, his respected attendant ; Miss Port, a suppliant virgin, waiting encouragement to bring forward some petition ; Miss Dewes, a young orphan, intended to win the royal compassion ; and myself a very solemn, sober, and decent mute.”

When she had time to recover from the embarrassment the King revealed himself with his oft-recurring “What—what?” and Miss Burney, thinking of the caricature of this colloquial mannerism of his which had appeared in the volume of *Probationary Odes*, was ready to burst into laughter—so she tells us ; but we know that she really meant not laughter, but tears : we feel that all through the interview she was never far removed from tears. But the august monarch’s “good breeding and consideration” saved her from yielding to the attack of what may be called “basileophobia.” His Majesty indeed showed great tact, and he had insight enough to enable him to perceive that even so morbidly sensitive a young woman might be soothed if she were to be given a chance of recalling an incident in which she was greatly interested ; so he repeated all that Dr. Burney had told him of the secret publication of *Evelina*—he wanted her immediate confirmation of the story. Moreover, he wanted to know why she was led to print the book, and when she replied with some stammering and hesitancy that it was because she thought it would look well in print, he roared

with laughter ; and again on hearing from her, in reply to a question as to whether she had kept her pen unemployed, that she believed she had exhausted herself. He could not believe that such a sudden cessation of literary work after two conspicuous successes was possible, and a good many people since have been equally incredulous. It was subsequently found, however, that she had spoken the truth.

Shortly afterward the Queen entered the room, and Miss Burney was more flustered than ever, because she was too short-sighted to know whether Her Majesty had noticed her or not. The King, however, very tactfully introduced her into the conversation, and the Queen also wished greatly to know what was to come from her pen in the future.

Within the next few days Fanny had met the Royal couple again, the King paying an evening visit, and the Queen calling on Mrs. Delany in the afternoon. They both talked upon literature, possibly in order to draw Miss Burney out ; they did not know that they had introduced a topic with which she was rather less conversant than themselves.

Now, all this interest which they were showing in Miss Burney—all the trouble which they were taking to become acquainted with her—"to see what was in her," as we may say, suggests that Mrs. Delany and Mr. Smelt had mentioned her name to the Queen when there had been a consultation as to the successor to Her Majesty's second Keeper of the Robes, the vacancy being occasioned by the retirement through ill-health of a Mrs. Haggerdorn from the post. But



not a word was as yet said to Miss Burney herself on the subject—the time was not yet ripe for any proposition to be made, and there were, of course, quite a number of young women of good family anxious for the place. It may be, however, that the name of Miss Burney had been suggested in quite a different connection: there were certain interesting offices to be filled up in the households of the young Princesses, and the fitness of a distinguished literary lady for one of these may have been hinted at by some person of daring originality of thought.

But whatever there may be in this surmise, it is pretty certain that Fanny Burney herself was unaware of any *arrière-pensée* in her examination before the King and Queen; and she went back to her home without suspecting anything. But she was soon in touch once more with Royalty; for the coveted post of Leader of the King's Band again became vacant, and Burney, who had been made organist of Chelsea Hospital by Edmund Burke—it was his last act before vacating the office of Paymaster-General—was extremely anxious to have his claims brought before the King.

He consulted his friend Smelt on this subject, and Smelt suggested that Burney should appear upon the Terrace at Windsor Castle on the next Sunday, accompanied by his daughter, and await the result of this delicate hint to His Majesty that he had a very loyal subject in the author of a *History of Music*.

The Diary, with its customary grasp of the elements

of a situation, lets us know what a fiasco was the result of this scheme. The truth was that the appointment had already been made. It had been conferred, as before, without the King's having a voice in the matter, for it seemed that it was not in accordance with Court etiquette for the Master of the King's Band to be appointed by the King. At a later period the King, during a lucid interval in his malady, told Fanny that he had been greatly annoyed at the disappointment suffered by her father. It was due to Lord Salisbury's having given the post to that inferior musician, Parsons—he was afterwards knighted—before he could interfere.

Fanny felt humiliated in lending herself to the scheme suggested by Mr. Smelt. The Terrace was more than usually crowded, and she would certainly have escaped all observation had not Lady Louisa Clayton, in whose party she was, and who doubtless was aware of her errand, put her forward so that she could not fail to be seen by the King and Queen, both of whom addressed her, although she had pulled her hat down on her face to give them a reasonable chance of allowing her to remain unnoticed. But, she says, "My poor father . . . looked so conscious and depressed that it pained me to see him. He was not spoken to, though he had a bow every time the King passed him, and a curtsy from the Queen. But it hurt him, and he thought it a very bad prognostic; and all there was at all to build upon was the graciousness shown to me, which indeed in the manner I was accosted was very flattering."

Dr. Burney learned the truth when they got back to London.

This happened in the month of May, 1786, and in June Mr. Smelt asked for an interview with Miss Burney at Mrs. Delany's house at Windsor, and when alone with her, stated that he had been commissioned by the Queen to offer her the post of Keeper of the Robes from which Mrs. Haggerdorn, who had come with Her Majesty from Mecklenburg, was retiring.

Thus it was that a connection was formed, the consequences of which have been far-reaching. We who have been placed in touch with the intimate life of King George III. and Queen Charlotte through Fanny Burney's having been forced into an uncongenial office, have reason to concern ourselves only with the results of this transaction. We have no reason to concern ourselves greatly with the incongruities which some people have lamented in the spectacle of a woman of great talent setting about the discharge of such duties as could be much more efficiently discharged by an ordinary young woman; what concerns us is the fact that this transaction was the means of placing before us such a series of pictures of a certain *genre* as enable us to appreciate many of the most interesting phases of the domestic life of a King and Queen who, without such a chronicler as Fanny Burney became, would never have been properly estimated by the English people.



IN THE SERVICE OF THE QUEEN



## CHAPTER X

### IN THE SERVICE OF THE QUEEN

FANNY BURNEY was thirty-four years of age when Mr. Smelt came to her with the gracious offer of the Queen's favour. She had had a very pleasant life, and for eight years she had been, as an author, regarded with something more than respect by the most critical people, men as well as women, in England. She had become the dearest friend of a discriminating patroness of literature and art, and the greatest man of letters of the day called her his darling Burney. Statesmen and artists were among her warmest admirers, and the feminine leaders of fashion were forced to read her books in order to keep themselves *au courant* with society. For any woman who had attained a position so extraordinary—so unparalleled in the history of literature—to be ready to accept an appointment in an extremely commonplace household that shut her off from her family and her friends as completely as if she had entered a convent, would seem little less than a freak of madness.

That is the side of the transaction which has been examined by most writers who have dealt with it, and



the conclusion to which they have come is unsailable.

But there is, we venture to think, another standpoint from which the incident is susceptible of being viewed, and we believe that a little consideration of the matter from this other side will lead one to the belief that Dr. Burney was quite justified in adding the weight of his persuasions to those of many other people to induce his daughter to take the grave step which, with many misgivings, she took at this time.

Now, even assuming that the far-seeing Dr. Burney had not in his mind the likelihood of this daughter of his being placed in a position that would give her a chance of writing a work which would be of enormous interest to the people of England, he had, we think, a very good right to urge her in a direction that would, he knew, lead to a competency. It was all very well, he must have felt, for this distinguished daughter of his to enjoy the fruits of the position which she had won for herself; but these fruits, though pleasant enough for the time being, could not be regarded as wholly satisfactory or sustaining. He had a right to think of his daughter's future—he would not have done his duty had he failed to turn his thoughts in that direction. He was sixty years of age, and he had found it impossible to save any money worth speaking of. His tuitions were not so numerous as they had once been, nor was he so capable of undertaking so many as he had once successfully coped with. He might reasonably have looked for his distinguished daughter's making a

good match, considering the eagerness with which her company was sought in many directions. Her sisters had married and left their home long before they had reached her age; but there she was, thirty-four years of age—a woman over thirty was looked upon as an old maid in those days of early marriages—and without having known what it was to have an eligible suitor. The prospect was serious.

Of course, it would not have seemed so serious if she had shown any signs of following up her success in literature; but he must have become as fully convinced as she herself that she had exhausted her capacity to produce anything else in the same line of imaginative work, even though her living might be dependent on it. Four years had elapsed between her first book and her second, and now an equal space had gone by, and yet she seemed to be unable to put pen to paper.

What prospect except penury was there for a woman like this, should her father die suddenly? Or even if he should live to be seventy, how much better off would she be?

There can be but little doubt that Dr. Burney looked at the whole situation in the most practical way, or that he took counsel with some equally practical friends as to whether the Queen's offer should be accepted or not; and the conclusion that was come to was an eminently sane one. The securing of a competency for his daughter by the means that had been suggested involved the greatest self-sacrifice he could think of, yet he was prepared

to urge her to take a step which he believed would be greatly to her ultimate advantage—it actually turned out so—though it involved some immediate sacrifice on her part as well as on his. It is all very well for rhetoricians like Macaulay to rave against Burney for persuading his daughter to remove herself from being the centre of a brilliant circle in society and become the merest cipher in the household of a commonplace King and still more commonplace Queen: there would be some reason in such raving if it could be shown that Fanny Burney was ready to continue contributing to the brilliancy of the circle of which she was the centre; but she had ceased to do so, and she had made up her mind that she would never do so again, and this made all the difference in the world to the aspects of the situation. If she had had a fortune of her own it might be claimed for her that she had a right to choose what life she would live; but, as it was, she was dependent upon her hard-working father, who was no longer young, for her daily bread and for the wherewithal to support the position which she occupied in the world; and unless it would have been possible to guarantee to her the continuation to an indefinite period of the life of her father and his contributions to her well-being, it is perfectly plain that in accepting the appointment offered by the Queen, Fanny Burney adopted the only course that was open to her in the circumstances.

And this is, we are convinced, the conclusion which will be come to by any one considering the whole question in the light of reason apart from the light



of rhetoric—neglecting altogether for the moment all question of the splendid outcome of her five years' residence in the service of the Queen, in the form of the *Diary*. If we were to take this into account at the beginning, it would not be necessary to discuss the rights and the wrongs of the transaction as we have done, with a view to counteract the impression which the unreasonableness of some writers in blaming Burney has had upon many readers interested in the eighteenth century.

Miss Burney had had no notion that for some time the Queen had been making every possible inquiry respecting her ; but such an inquisition had been going on ever since Mrs. Delany had suggested—as she certainly had—the advantages that would accrue to the Royal Family could the accomplished Miss Burney become attached to a Royal household. It was in connection with one of the young Princesses that the matter of employing Miss Burney was originally discussed ; and it would appear that Mr. Smelt, at one of his interviews with Fanny, only talked vaguely as to the exact nature of the offer he was commissioned to make to her, but the post of Keeper of the Robes becoming vacant rather suddenly at last, by the time she had considered the vague question of Royal employment, the exact nature of the duty she would be asked to discharge was stated to her.

At first Mr. Smelt's mission seemed likely to result in failure. He had every reason to feel surprised that little Miss Burney, the daughter

of a music-teacher, should not forthwith jump at the offer he brought to her. And good Mrs. Delany could not but have felt hurt as well as surprised at the hesitation shown by the one whom the Queen delighted to honour. We may be sure that she spoke very kindly to her about the sin of flying in the face of Providence. But Fanny had been startled, and was almost as horrified by the proposal as the young virgin of her period is represented as being when an offer of marriage is thoughtlessly made to her.

The letter which she wrote on the spur of the moment to her friend Miss Cambridge may be accepted as an exact reflection of her mind after thinking over all that Mr. Smelt had said to her. It was plain that he had not taken any particular pains to minimise the exclusiveness of the position of such a Court official as Keeper of the Robes. He told her all that she repeated to Miss Cambridge—that her attendance was to be incessant—the confinement to the Court continual—that she need not expect to be allowed to pay even a single visit beyond the purlieus of a palace, or to receive a visit from any one without leave. In short, she was made to understand that retirement to a convent of the strictest order would impose upon her no greater restrictions than her acceptance of the post which he came to offer her. It is no wonder that she should exclaim, "What a life for me, who have friends so dear to me, and to whom friendship is the balm, the comfort, the very support of existence!"

But against the apparent hardship of these restrictions he enumerated the many advantages that she would have over the rest of humanity—with a few unimportant exceptions. She was actually to have an apartment of her own in one of the buildings that did duty for a palace, and she would be permitted to take her meals at the table with the senior holder of the office of Keeper of the Robes, and this was the table at which the Queen's own visitors dined; in addition, she was to be allowed a manservant all to herself—though without a bell in her room to summon him—and, most important of all, he assured her, “in such a situation, you may have opportunities of serving your particular friends—especially your father—such as scarce any other could afford you.” “My dear Miss Cambridge will easily feel that this was a plea not to be answered,” Fanny wrote to her friend; and we are sure that when it was communicated to her father, he thoroughly agreed with her.

But even after reviewing the most favourable conditions, and adding to them the honour and the privilege of being permitted to approach so close to the person of the Royal lady—which undoubtedly Fanny appreciated to the full—she shrank from accepting the post; but left it to her father to decide whether she should pass through the door which was to shut her off from her old associates and her old associations as exclusively as if she were a prisoner in the Tower. But she knew perfectly well what his decision would be: “I cannot even to my father utter my reluctance—I see him so much delighted at the



prospect of an establishment he looks upon as so honourable," she wrote to her friend, adding the despairing cry: "I now see the end—it is next to inevitable. I can suggest nothing upon earth that I dare say for myself. . . . But what can make me amends for all I shall forfeit? . . . My greatest terror is lest the Queen should make me promise myself to her for a length of years. . . . Could I but save myself from a lasting bond—from a promised devotion!"

She was not mistaken in anything that she foresaw. She had no chance against the powers that were leagued against her. She gave in with as good a grace as she could, and on June 20, 1786, she went to the Queen's Lodge at Windsor to see her apartment and to receive her detailed instructions respecting the life upon which she was to enter.

And the strange part of the business was that so many people who knew her well and who were acquainted with her mode of life and the position she occupied in the most interesting society of the period, were ready to congratulate her and her father upon her appointment. We have already referred to Edmund Burke's approval of it. He left a card of congratulation upon Dr. Burney "upon the honour done by the Queen to Miss Burney"—and Miss Burney found the card years afterward when she was compiling her father's *Memoirs*; and Hannah More wrote to their common friend Pepys: "I was in the very joy of my heart on seeing the other day in the papers that our charming Miss Burney has got an

establishment so near the Queen. How I love the Queen for having so wisely chosen!" Others ventured to express the opinion that the choice made by the Queen reflected honour, not only upon Miss Burney, but upon the Queen herself; and we have already alluded to Horace Walpole's expression of regret that he should not live long enough to see the fruits of her residence at the Court. He was shrewd enough to perceive what a chance this close observer of life and its comedy would have.

And then came the trying hour when she was to say farewell to her father. Nothing could be more pathetic than her account of how she betrayed her inmost feelings when she was holding him by the arm as he walked with her from Mrs. Delany's cottage to the Royal Lodge. When they were in the room that had been occupied by the previous holder of the post which was now hers, and only awaited the summons of the Sovereign to part them, they were both overcome with emotion, and the father's manly attempt to compose his daughter's feelings made her try to convince him that it was only the thought of the coming audience with Her Majesty that so moved her. And then came the dread summons.

Fanny Burney's account of the whole scene reaches the highest level of pathos, without containing a single word that is associated by convention with pathos. It is absolutely natural in every way, but it compels a reader to feel with her at every moment.

The Queen received her in the Royal dressing-room and in the presence of the Senior Keeper of the

Robes, Mrs. Schwellenberg, and tried to place her at her ease by talking of her father and her journey and its incidents. After a quarter of an hour she dismissed her, asking her colleague to show her to her apartment. "She saw me much agitated," writes this marvellous observer, "and attributed it, no doubt, to the awe of her presence. Oh, she little knew my mind had no room in it for feelings of that sort!"

In another moment she is back in the arms of her father, assuring him of the kindness of the Queen and gratifying him by her account of her interview with the gracious lady. "His hopes and gay expectations were all within call, and they were back at the first beckoning," she wrote to her sister.

And thus they separated with smiles—of a kind: they were both hoping for the best. This is the form that was taken by her hopes:—

"Now all was finally settled, to borrow my own words, I needed no monitor to tell me it would be foolish, useless, even wicked, not to reconcile myself to my destiny. . . . I am married, my dearest Susan—I look upon it in that light—I was averse to forming the union, and I endeavoured to escape it; but my friends interfered—they prevailed and the knot is tied. What then now remains but to make the best wife in my power? I am bound to it in duty and I will strain every nerve to succeed."

She kept to this resolution; but it was just the constant strain upon every nerve that broke her down.



It is not such a temperament as was Fanny Burney's that comes well out of such an ordeal as is entailed by a constant discharge of commonplace duties, unvarying from one day to another. The phlegmatic, easy-going, docile, mechanical intelligence is that which achieves a success in such a situation as she was called on to fill. A woman whose nerves are perpetually on the strain without there being the slightest need for any strain is the worst in the world for such a place. And thus it was that Fanny Burney made but a very indifferent tire-woman, but an incomparable recorder of everything that was going on and that she thought prudent to record. Only it may be it was a pity that she was so prudent in her judgment.



**THE DAILY ROUND**





## CHAPTER XI

### THE DAILY ROUND

A GREAT change had taken place in respect of the *personnel* of the Royal household when the virtuous George followed his grandfather, who could scarcely be so described by even the most indulgent chronicler. George II. had for many years before his death been a widower—an honorary widower. So deeply attached had he been to his spouse Caroline that when on her death-bed she urged him to marry again, he vowed never to do so. “Jamais!” he cried. “Jamais: j’aurai des maîtresses,” and, faithful to her memory—which was a good deal more than he had been to herself—he had kept his word to the letter. There had thus been no Queen’s Household for a long time, so that there was no difficulty in changing the basis upon which Queen Caroline’s had been formed, when it was necessary to start one for Queen Charlotte.

Queen Caroline had had, in addition to the Mistress of the Robes, who was a Duchess, six Ladies of the Bedchamber, who were Countesses; six Women of the Bedchamber, and six Maids of Honour. Some of these offices were honorary, and so was the honour. The notorious Mrs. Howard, who

was afterward created Lady Suffolk, was one of the Bedchamber women, her nomination coming from the King, whose frugal forethought saved a double payment to this lady, though her duties were not confined to attendance upon one only of the Royal pair. He had even gone so far as to suggest to his consort that it would be nice of her to pay the lady's husband for the deprivation of her society; but the Queen declined to take the hint.

The Hanoverian tradition in regard to these members of the staff was not maintained by the successor to this Royal humorist, nor was the Hanoverian etiquette—copied from Versailles—of the Royal dressing-room. We do not need to refer to the exquisite French colour-prints which deal with the subject of the toilette of the great lady of the early Georgian years; we have an abundant supply of information on the subject in the satires of the period and in the scenes of some of the comedies. The lady's dressing-room was usually the most interesting apartment in a house that had any pretension to fashion. It was something between a painter's *atelier* and a chemist's laboratory; and during the two or three hours that the various processes of the toilette occupied, the great lady received her friends, of both sexes, practically from the moment she stepped out of her canopied bed. In France it was not unusual for the lady to receive her friends, of both sexes, when actually in her bath, but we should hasten to mention that no sense of propriety could be offended when it was known that a spoonful of milk was added to the water.



Good Queen Caroline found the hours of dressing all too short for what she had to get through in the way of business ; and so she arranged to economise her time by having her chaplains read prayers in an ante-room. This was surely an excellent plan, for it was always possible to close the door between the rooms when the Queen wished to make a remark to her friends. "Why don't you go on with your prayers?" she cried upon one occasion when it seemed to her that the voice of the chaplain had died away to nothing. "Madam," he replied, "I decline to whistle the sacred words through a keyhole." Upon another occasion the chaplain was put into a second ante-room, where he found himself in the act of kneeling before a picture of Venus. "A proper altar-piece!" he exclaimed.

But if the etiquette of the Royal dressing-room did not extend to spiritual matters, it was inflexible in mundane. The Queen was in no way behind her consort in these ridiculous formalities ; and when Mrs. Howard, that one of the Bedchamber women to whom we have just referred, refused to kneel before her when presenting the silver ewer, her colleague holding the basin, the Royal lady was greatly annoyed and insisted on the kneeling service. But Mrs. Howard was not disposed to give in on this point, and wrote to her friend Arbuthnot to inquire from Lady Masham, who had been Bedchamber woman to Queen Anne, if this item of etiquette had any precedent. She got a complete reply which should settle the question for ever ;

and the kneeling of the Bedchamber woman was established, as well as the upright posture of the Bedchamber lady. When the Queen wanted a fan, the Bedchamber woman handed it to the Bedchamber lady, who gave it into the Royal clutch. That was a point worth having settled once and for all. What would have happened if the Bedchamber woman had passed it directly into the hands of the Queen can only be surmised. One recalls instinctively the fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, whom the earth swallowed up for another breach of etiquette—the etiquette of plunder!

But in the matter of drinking there was still another set of rules. When the Queen dined in public, which she did every Sunday, it was a page who brought the glass from another functionary, and handed it to the Bedchamber woman, who passed it on to the Bedchamber lady, who handed it to the Queen without kneeling. The Queen, however, was permitted to drink the contents of the glass without further assistance. With the morning chocolate the procedure was simpler. The Bedchamber woman brought the chocolate and handed it to the Queen without kneeling; but as it was the page of the backstairs who put on the Royal shoes, it is possible that this operation necessitated a genuflection.

Very different from all this laborious ceremony was the system that had been inaugurated and was maintained by Queen Charlotte when Fanny Burney entered her service. All that can be said of her duty is that it would have been quite trifling if it

had not entailed her constant presence within sound of the Queen's bell. Never was that bell to sound without her being at hand to hear every tinkle. At first the thought that she was to answer the bell like any maidservant almost overwhelmed her, but when she found that Mrs. Fielding, the Bedchamber woman, was in the same position, though the granddaughter of an earl, she recovered, and a little reflection soon convinced her that there was nothing demeaning to any one in answering a bell. It seemed too that her predecessor, Mrs. Haggerdorn, took pleasure in hearing the sound, without having any desire to be empowered herself to summon her servant through such a medium. There was, strange to say, no bell-pull in her room ; so that when she had need of her servant she had to find him as best she could. Miss Burney did not complain, and at last the omission was made good by an observant official.

But the whole scheme of apartments at these Royal Lodges at Windsor was quite unworthy of the place or its occupants. The Royal Lodges, as they were called, appear to have been jerry-built structures—there was nearly as much jerry-building in those days as there is just now—although designed by Sir Thomas Chambers, and with certainly few conveniences for a family. The number and variety of draughts between the rooms and corridors formed a constant topic among the equerries and ladies-in-waiting.

But Fanny Burney—who now had the title of “Mrs.” conferred upon her in official documents—was greatly pleased with her apartment. She had a drawing-room



on the ground-floor of the Queen's Lodge, looking out upon the Round Tower, at one side, and opening on the other side upon the Little Park. Her bedroom looked into the garden. At the door of the drawing-room was the staircase that led to the apartment of Mrs. Schwollenberg, the Senior Keeper of the Robes.

Fanny Burney's duties kept her pretty frequently on those stairs and on the corridors leading to the Queen's rooms. Her work compelled her to rise at six, and she was supposed to be dressed to await the Queen's summons for attendance, which usually came at half past seven. Her Majesty was an early riser; she invariably had her hair dressed by a coiffeur before she called for any of her staff of ladies, and as the process was by no means a brief one—there was more architectural skill shown in the Gothic tower upon her head than in the façade of the Lodges—she must have been out of bed as soon as her "Mrs." Burney. A German named Mrs. Thielky did most of the practical work of the toilette, selecting the articles for the morning wear and handing them to the Keeper of the Robes, who put them on the Royal person. "'Tis fortunate for me I have not the handing of them!" wrote Fanny. "I should never know which to take first, embarrassed as I am, and should run a prodigious risk of giving the gown before the hoop, and the fan before the neckerchief." If this was so, it seems rather extraordinary that she did not take some lessons, so as to understand the rudiments of her work.

But this first toilette was quite a simple affair, just good enough for going to prayers in. The service was held in the King's chapel in the Castle, and it was *de rigueur* for all the Princesses with their governesses to attend. The King also attended, with an equerry, so that it will be understood how great a change had taken place in the Royal *ménage* since the days when Queen Caroline was content to perform her devotions by deputy, only identifying herself with the sentiments of the chaplains to the extent of the breadth of the crack in the door.

After chapel Fanny went to her own room, where she had breakfast, the usual artisan's hour being allowed to her for this meal; for she found it necessary to look after her own sumptuary preparations for the week: there were Court-days that required a special dress, and there were dozens of Royal birthdays, every one of which necessitated an appearance in a new dress, for the Royal birthdays had the importance of the numerous Saints' days in Catholic countries; and, moreover, the dresses had to be "moderately fashionable." Knowing how expensive were such things more than a century ago, one is led to wonder how the £200 which she received as salary was sufficient to pay for her wardrobe.

At a quarter before twelve, except on Wednesdays and Saturdays, she had to dress to begin her serious work upon the Queen, for Her Majesty had to be prepared for the day. On Wednesdays and Saturdays the Royal hair had to be curled and craped, and

on every other day, powdered. We do not hear of Ladies of the Bedchamber or Women of the Bedchamber being in attendance for this rite, but Mrs. Schwellenberg, Mrs. Burney, and Mrs. Thielky were required. The two Robe-keepers removed the morning gown and put on the powdering jacket, and then the hairdresser came upon the scene. While this operation was being performed Her Majesty gave her attention to literature, and never failed, we are told, to read some paragraph aloud, commenting on it and inviting the comments of her literary attendant. In this way, it is not going too far to say, her literary attendant became informed on many departments of literature upon which she had been woefully ignorant before. But when the business of powdering was going on the Queen invariably sent her out of the room, so that her clothes might not be injured—a considerate measure which she fully appreciated. Indeed, if we were to judge from the grateful comments made by Fanny Burney upon this and other acts of her mistress, we should be inclined to believe that a more thoughtful and considerate lady never lived. It seems strange—quite unbelievable, in fact—that Queen Charlotte should have been at any time of her life the termagant some historians try to make out that she was. The treatment of their attendants by the ladies of quality in the days when the Lady of Quality flourished exceedingly may be gathered from countless allusions to it to be found in the novels and satires of the day. If we are to believe such



evidence as is forthcoming in these quarters, the lady's-maid became the safety-valve by which the ebullitions of bad temper on the part of the lady of quality were got rid of "when lovers or when lap-dogs" had been annoying. She was rapped over the knuckles with the heels of those little slippers which we see in some cabinets to-day, and she had her ears boxed and her hair pulled on the smallest pretext. In fact, if the lady's-maid of to-day were to be treated as her predecessor of a hundred and fifty years ago was treated, her mistress would be compelled to spend most of her pocket-money in fines for assault, unless she were sent to prison without the option of a fine. A knowledge of these facts makes the consideration shown by Queen Charlotte to her attendants seem all the more gracious. Not merely was Fanny Burney excused when the powdering was going on, but she was also allowed to go away to complete her own toilette should the Royal summons have come rather earlier than she expected, and also when the Queen felt inclined to continue reading.

The last process of the toilette was conducted in the chief dressing-room, and we are told that it did not take long; and from that time until Her Majesty was to be put to bed Fanny saw nothing of her unless by chance. At five o'clock dinner was served in the eating-room for the two Keepers of the Robes—a more ill-matched couple never sat down to a table; but the meal was frequently enlivened—it could not well be rendered more dull—by the presence

of some of those visitors who had had an audience of the Queen and were not eligible for the servants' hall. Bishops were named by Mr. Smelt when he was giving Fanny an example of the class of person whom she would have the privilege of entertaining in this room on behalf of Her Majesty ; but we are not quite convinced that the nomination had carried sufficient weight with it to overcome the reluctance with which Fanny Burney accepted the Queen's gracious offer. She had met with more than one bishop in the course of her life, so that the idea did not impress her with the same awe that she had felt when addressed for the first time by the homeliest King that ever lived. But people of greater social rank now and again came to the table—people who had never heard the name of the Senior Robe-keeper, but who had for long been familiar with that of the younger—and said so, not possessing the tact of the latter, who never said anything to suggest that she was a greater personage in the world than Mrs. Schwellenberg.

After dinner came some hours that might have been pleasant enough ; as she describes them, however, they appear to have been just the opposite. She followed her Senior upstairs, where they had coffee together, remaining in summer until what she calls "the terracing" was over—when the Royal Family had had their afternoon stroll on the Terrace between the lanes of their loyal subjects—and then came an hour for tea in the lower room, where the equerries were usually to be found with any visitor who had been

invited by the King or Queen to the Concert, which took place at nine. At the conclusion of this entertainment supper was available, and Mrs. Schwollenberg availed herself of it; but her colleague took it for granted that she had forfeited her claim ever to have this meal since, upon the evening of her arrival, she had not felt inclined for anything beyond a little fruit—which we remember she was accustomed to at St. Martin's Street, even when there was so distinguished a guest among her father's friends as Bruce, the Abyssinian explorer. Between eleven and twelve came her summons to the Queen's room, and by the aid of the useful Mrs. Thielky the Royal lady was put comfortably and dutifully to bed, the ceremony occupying less than half an hour.

Between twelve and one, then, Miss Burney was quite free to do what she pleased until bedtime. As she had been up since six in the morning and had to be up at the same hour the next day, one can easily believe that she never was puzzled to know how to pass the time until she laid her head on her pillow. "To sleep I fall the moment I have put out my candle and laid down my head," she wrote.

We should think so. Less than six hours in bed after a day, not exactly of what might be called hard work by a lodging-house maid, but of what any one must call wearying work, can by no means be regarded as excessive for an ordinary person, or suggestive of a sluggard if indulged in by an attendant upon a sovereign.

It will be seen that the actual discharge of her



duties in relation to the Queen did not take up more than a few hours of the day ; and no one could call them arduous duties, considering the good nature and the leniency of the Royal mistress—she was always ready to overlook an omission which other ladies of much less exalted rank would regard as grossly flagrant—it was the way these duties broke up the day that caused them to be wearisome to Miss Burney—it was the way they compelled her to think of herself as a prisoner, unable to do, without asking permission, any of those things which she had always done freely and without question—it was this sense of the restraints of servitude that made her duties irksome to her, as they could not but be to any one who had been brought up with only the smallest restriction upon her coming and going. That she was able to continue doing all that was imposed upon her, uttering only an occasional murmur in her Diary, shows us that she would have been able to do anything that she set her hand to do. It shows us that she had perseverance enough to enable her to overcome all the trivial technicalities of writing for the stage, so that, had she been judiciously encouraged in this direction after her first essay had been—on insufficient grounds, we believe—pronounced a failure, she would have written a comedy that might compare with the best of those of the last quarter of the century. The spirit that caused her to face boldly and to overcome with distinction to herself the many difficulties that confronted her when entering upon a life that was utterly different from any experience that had been

hers, would surely have allowed her to achieve a triumph in a branch of literature which was quite congenial with her temperament and on which her power of minute observation would have had a chance of being exercised with great advantage.

There, however, was her book of hours—the list of the divisions of her day—her many days at Windsor; and we have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the work that she had to do and with the extent of the demands it made upon her, and the conclusion which we must come to is, we think, that there is no foundation whatsoever for the assertion made by the purveyors of the picturesque that this woman of genius was all but worked to death by a Queen without genius. The component parts of a pathetic situation are to be found in the juxtaposition of the two figures, and it appealed very forcibly to the feelings of a period that was bathed in tears at the least plausible story of the poor and lowly being ground beneath the iron heel of wealthy Oppression. The situation was, it is quite true, a ridiculous one, but the element of oppression never entered into it for a moment. The Queen was considerate, and she had need to be so, for it is to be feared that her tire-woman was something of a trial; and that is where a suggestion appears of the geometrical tragedy of the square peg and the round hole.

But was the Queen never aware of the absence of the sense of adaptability on the part of her attendant? Every one knows that the atten-

dant upon a great personage should possess, in addition to the full complement of senses, a sense of adaptability to even the most unusual of circumstances ; but Fanny Burney never succeeded in acquiring this, though she did her best to please, and probably succeeded in pleasing in one way, if not in another, the gracious lady whom she served. But did the gracious lady not see that, simple as the duties were, her "Mrs." Burney did them not nearly so well as a commonplace young woman would have done them ?

We are convinced that she became aware of the geometrical incongruities between them, to which we have alluded, very early in their acquaintance. We are convinced that the Queen meant her to occupy a very different place from that to which she was called. The questions put to her from time to time—allusions to her literary tastes and judgments, and so forth, lead us to believe that it was the Queen's intention to offer her a situation close to herself, or to some of the young Princesses, that should give her ability—the Queen assumed the ability—a chance of being displayed satisfactorily. But she soon found out that these qualifications for service in what she believed would be a more congenial sphere for her tire-woman did not exist. She found out that she had nothing to learn in the way of literature from this literary lady : she herself had, as we have already mentioned, read far more widely than had the literary lady, and she was possessed of quite as high a critical faculty in regard to most literary matters ; while in



the matter of elocution, supposing a situation might one day be open for any one possessing some powers that might be so described, she quickly found out that nothing could be done for Fanny.

We think that there is abundance of evidence in the Diaries to admit of our making this assumption. But what was left for the Queen to do in the circumstances? Well, she liked her "Mrs." Burney very well, and so she tolerated her as a tire-woman when she found that she was not qualified for the discharge of those other duties for which the Queen had hoped she would be eminently fitted. The whole situation was the outcome of the Royal regard for Mrs. Delany and of Mrs. Delany's regard for Fanny Burney; and the result of its development was a considerable amount of inconvenience to the Queen, a large amount of care (with compensations) to Fanny Burney, and an incomparable record of intimate Court life during five interesting years that continues to delight thousands of readers.



THE QUEEN'S BELL





## CHAPTER XII

### THE QUEEN'S BELL

AT first everything went on as smoothly as could be wished. Fanny Burney felt quite reasonably proud of being in such close touch with the Queen ; but the sense of constraint seemed never absent from her for long. The necessity for never moving beyond the sound of the Queen's bell weighed greatly upon her for a long time—indeed, she never came to regard the restrictions to which she was subjected as would an ordinary menial, simply as a matter of course. The fact was, we repeat, that she had not been subjected early in life to such discipline as would have made her life seem easy to her now. Boys going from the rigid discipline of a public school to Sandhurst do not find the precision of life in barracks intolerable : they have been accustomed from childhood to wait for their orders, and to sink the freedom of their own individuality in the uniformity of the machine by which they are governed. But Fanny Burney had never been to school, and she had been subjected only to the smallest amount of control, owing to the death of one parent and the outdoor occupation of the other. And then came her success with *Evelina*, causing her to receive

invitation after invitation to houses where she was the most honoured guest, coming and going as she pleased. This could hardly be regarded as a good training for a career that bound her never to be beyond the sound of the Queen's bell, never to be absent from her post for a single hour, never to pay a visit without leave and never to receive a visitor without leave. But she had been made aware of the conditions of her new life, and only rarely did she grumble.

It is sadly amusing to read the mock-heroic letter she wrote before she had any idea that she would ever be in such a position as necessitated her taking very seriously all that she wrote in fun, and then to compare it with what she wrote afterward very seriously on the same subject.

"DIRECTIONS FOR COUGHING, SNEEZING, OR MOVING BEFORE THE KING AND QUEEN," she headed her little satire, and began it with the admonition: "In the first place you must not cough. . . . In the second place you must not sneeze. . . . In the third place you must not upon any account stir either hand or foot. If by chance a black pin runs into your head, you must not take it out. . . . If, however, the agony is very great, you may privately bite the inside of your cheek or of your lips for a little relief; taking care meanwhile to do it so cautiously as to make no apparent dent outwardly; and with that precaution, if you even gnaw a bit out it will not be minded, only be sure either to swallow it, or commit it to a corner of the inside of your mouth till they are gone."



How mournfully the writer of this (literally) "mordant" bit of satire must have smiled in after-years when she read it, thinking of the many days and nights that she had spent in uneasiness at the thought that she might unwittingly have offended in some particular the worthy old couple who, by no will of their own, were insulated by etiquette.

But Fanny Burney really did far better than any one could have expected that she would do in her unaccustomed position. Nearly every one about the Court was amazed at her appointment, and those who had been intriguing for the appointment of one of their relations as Robe-keeper could scarcely be blamed if they looked askance at her, and then hastened to whisper something about her into a sympathetic ear. But there she was, and the wise ones, knowing that she might on her part do some whispering in the Queen's ear, perceived that she was a person with whom it might be as well to be friendly. The governesses and under-governesses of the Princesses, as well as the equerries, were extremely civil, and even the highest officials in the Royal entourage were gracious to her. Possibly some of them hoped that her appointment meant the breaking up of the Mecklenburg ring, consisting of Mrs. Schwollenberg, Mrs. Haggerdorn, and Mrs. Thielky—a happy little family party they must have been in the dressing-room every morning and evening discussing matters from the standpoint of Mecklenburg.

Lady Effingham, the First Lady of the Bed-

chamber, waited upon her within three days of her appointment, and the manner of this act of courtesy was certainly devoid of ceremony. Fanny Burney had been to call upon Madame de La Fite, a French lady who, being one of the readers to the Royal Family, had apartments at Windsor—Fanny had met her at Norbury Park, the home of her dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Locke—and had prolonged her stay so that when the Queen rang for her noon attendance she was not ready. She had only time to slip on her morning gown and a large cap and hurry to the Royal dressing-room. The Queen had on her *peignoir* and was in the hands of her hairdresser, so she excused Fanny's immediate attendance, and told her she might complete her dressing. Off rushed Fanny, and almost into the arms of a lady who had been to call upon her, but whom she was obliged to fly past, only to be met by a gentleman wearing a star and a red riband, who, bowing civilly, said, "Miss Burney, I presume," but was checked by her excited "Sir!" and retreated; and then, close to her room, she was spoken to by Lady Effingham, and only with difficulty evaded her in order to complete her own toilette and then Her Majesty's. Later, however, she met this lady in the Royal dressing-room, and the Queen, she tells us, "very graciously kept me some time, addressing me frequently while I stayed, in the conversation that took place, as if with a sweet view to point out to this first Lady of her Bedchamber I have yet seen, the favourable light in which she considers me."

Some of the other ladies of the Court had either met Fanny before or had some friends in common with her, so that she had no reason ever to feel herself in the midst of strangers, and at all times the Queen treated her with tact and such consideration as she ever remembered with gratitude.

Within the first week of her attendance she was twice late for her duties. The second occasion was on the Sunday following the lapse which we have described, but the origin was such as would cause the Queen's forgiveness to be easily extended to her. Charles Wesley, the musician who did so much for Church music in England, had conducted the service on the organ and afterward, by command of the King, played several of Handel's compositions. Fanny, who seems to have had a good everyday liking for music of a high order, though without possessing any special faculty of criticism of this or any other art, was so carried away by the performance that she forgot her obligations, and allowed the Queen to send for her twice. The King would have pleaded for her if there had been any need to do so, laying the blame on the fascinations of Handel. How could any one separate oneself from the majestic strains of Handel to attend upon any Majesty? He was a thorough Handelian, and knew more about the great master's powers than did his grandfather, who attended nearly every production of his at the Opera House in the Haymarket, or than did his father, the amiable Frederick, who patronised the opposition opera simply to annoy King George II., their



ridiculous feud bringing about the bankruptcy of the great Master-builder of cathedrals of harmony.

The Queen was, however, very lenient, and did not reprove the want of punctuality by even so much as a cold glance. She had wisdom enough to allow of her seeing that this was the way to treat her new servant ; and Fanny made up her mind that she would let nothing come between her and her duty. She shut herself off from all callers for some time before the hours of her attendance, stationing her manservant in the corridor to prevent any one from obtruding upon her. She found that the fear of being late made her nervous and ill.

And before the end of her second week she received a hint that Lady Effingham, though herself so high an official in the Royal Household, had failed to interpret aright her apparent brusqueness when they had met in the passage and Fanny was rushing to get on her dress. It was Mrs. Delany who found this out, and she advised Fanny to go to Lady Effingham's country seat at Stoke Place, to make an explanation and offer an apology. The Queen's leave for this excursion had of course to be obtained, but as this was the first time that Fanny had to ask for "an evening out," it is not to be wondered that she did not satisfy herself as to the best way to go about it. She records, however, that she was glad of this chance of "trying the length of her liberty," for she had made up her mind that she would not be as her predecessor had been in regard to her going out and coming in : Mrs. Haggerdorn, she was informed, had never stirred

out of sound of the bell ; she had no friends outside the Palace ; “but, thank God,” wrote Fanny, “I am not in the same situation.”

When she came to tell her senior colleague, Mrs. Schwollenberg, that lady was astonished, but apparently she offered no comment upon so unprecedented an incident as an attendant absenting herself for a whole afternoon. But even if Mrs. Schwollenberg had remonstrated with her, Fanny would still have gone ; for the mood was on her to stand up against that person : she had an idea that, just as she had forfeited her right to have a *souper complet* every night because she had said to Mrs. Schwollenberg that she would only eat a little fruit before retiring, so, by refraining from inviting any guest to the table which they had in common, she had forfeited her privileges in this direction, and she was determined not to yield another inch to the Senior Robe-keeper.

And so she went with Mrs. Delany to pay her visit to the Lady of the Bedchamber and was very kindly received by her and her husband. But we may be sure that Mrs. Schwollenberg, sitting alone at her dinner, made up her mind that such independence of action should be checked. Mrs. Schwollenberg must have recalled the good old days when she and another nonentity of the same nationality had stood one on each side of their Royal countrywoman, speaking no word that was not German, and having no interest in the world—no aspiration beyond seeing that Her Majesty was comfortably disposed of for the night. Schwollenberg and Haggerdorn ! Not by any means a pair of

nonentities. The latter only is a nonentity to us in these days ; the former has had the Tithonus gift of immortality conferred upon her by the little lady whom she must have despised for her flippancy in preferring to visit Lady Effingham at Stoke rather than drink coffee *tête-à-tête* with a Schwellenberg.

But Fanny Burney, after her evening out, settled down to her duties as firmly as the most adroit of the nonentities around her, whose names she was rescuing from oblivion ; and we do not hear of her being often late after she had received a visit from the lively Mrs. Hastings, wife of Warren Hastings, who had detained her one day, thereby causing the sentry servant to pace the corridor every forenoon to keep off visitors, lively or otherwise. Among these duties, it may be mentioned, was the mixing of snuff for Her Majesty's own absorption. It appears that she did this to the entire satisfaction of the Royal lady. It was the etiquette of the Court that the blending was to be done by the Second Keeper of the Robes. The Queen was not abstemious in the matter of snuff ; but she was a very humble devotee to the practice compared with one of her sons, at whose death five tons of various blends were found in his cellars.

By the end of her first fortnight in the service of the Queen, Fanny Burney had become acquainted with the full range of her duties at all the Royal residences. At the beginning of her second week the Court moved to Kew. Here the accommodation for the King and Queen and their Household was of the most meagre sort, and, in consequence, the mode of life



of all was considerably modified, though at Windsor it certainly did not err on the side of display. The Royal Lodge was uncommonly like a Royal barrack. There were staircases in every passage, and passages to every closet. "I lost myself continually only in passing from my own room to the Queen's," Fanny wrote. Before she had been for many minutes under the roof, her guide to her room being Miss Planta, one of the teachers to the Princess Royal and her sister Augusta, she was made aware of the absence of ceremony in this queer building, for when she was in the act of being piloted to her room she heard the King's voice at the end of the passage. She made one of those rushes to cover to which she was becoming accustomed, but she was too late; before she could close the door of her sitting-room behind her His Majesty was by her side. He had with him a surveyor, to whom he was giving instructions respecting alterations—they were bound to be improvements—in the accommodation for the suite; but apparently finding that the apartment was comfortable enough, he merely smiled at the occupant, good-humouredly remarking that she was in possession, and walked out to see what he could do in another direction.

At the Kew Lodge the Queen did not appear to find early prayers a necessity; consequently she rose later and dressed more plainly. Both she and the King walked about quite unattended. The absence of a second sitting-room gave Miss Burney the privilege of an unbroken day by the side of Mrs. Schwollenberg, and there were no equerries to be entertained at tea-time.

But two days after their arrival at Kew they had all to go off to London for the holding of a Court at St. James's. Here all was, of course, ceremony of the strictest form. Mrs. Schwellenberg went at once on their reaching the Palace to the Queen's dressing-room, Miss Planta to the Princesses' apartments, and Miss Burney to the rooms that had been assigned to her to await developments, for it would never have done to give her a chance of making a mistake in regard to the rite of apparelling Her Majesty. It is greatly to be feared that Miss Burney was thinking more of the outside than the inside of the Palace just at this time, for she records the satisfaction she felt on observing that there was a private staircase to her corridor from the passage between the Park and St. James's Street, so that she might appoint any friend of her own to meet her in her rooms on a Court day. "I hope never to be there again without making use of the privilege," she wrote.

But on the day of her making the acquaintance of these handy rooms she had not, of course, a chance of availing herself of the opportunity they offered her of stealing an hour or two from Royalty to friendship; so she sent her manservant off to borrow a pen, ink, and paper from one of the pages, and occupied herself writing letters until Mrs. Leverick, the town Wardrobe-woman, summoned her to attend upon the Queen's dressing *en grande tenue*; and upon this occasion the duties of the Second Keeper of the Robes seemed to be confined to a chat with the

Princesses, while Her Majesty, having been robed, went to speak to the Duchess of Ancaster in the ante-room. Fanny was still so engaged when the Queen returned and the bell was rung for the Bedchamber-woman in attendance, to complete the dressing, according to the inflexible rule of the Palace to provide at least a pretence of employment for all the worthy ladies in the Household. By no means arduous were the labours of the Robe-keeper. She only tied on the Royal necklace and handed the Royal fan and gloves ; but then came the more fatiguing duty of bearing the Royal train from the dressing-room to the ante-room. It was supposed that she would be thoroughly exhausted at this stage, for the Lady of the Bedchamber had to be summoned, and she took up the burden of the train, and so the procession went to the Drawing-room, and the ceremony of Presentations was proceeded with.

Fanny Burney gave all these details in the next of her Diary-letters after returning to Kew and thence to Windsor ; but she gave no sign of being in the least measure interested in what she was discoursing about ; and it is greatly to be feared that her heart was not in her work—her work being clearly no more than waiting for something to do. She had plenty of time for thinking, and all her thoughts were centred upon the interesting world outside the environs of Royalty. She had had her experience of drawing-rooms in which court was paid to the young writer who had captured men's hearts and women's minds with *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, these two princesses of her



genius ; and the ceremony that was going on at the Royal Drawing - room had but the most languid interest for her. Fanny Burney, the author, whose name had been on all lips a few years earlier and who was still unforgotten by the greatest intellects in England, was here playing a much less important part than the most frivolous of the *débutantes* whom the Queen delighted to honour. She felt as far out of her proper sphere as a great inventor must feel when a witness in a court of law, where the usher appears to be a person of overwhelming importance and a junior counsel alludes to him by his surname only and is permitted to be impertinent at his expense, while he himself is sternly rebuked should he make an attempt to retaliate.

But knowing that her letters would be read by her father, she uttered no complaint in any of them ; and she knew that by the other members of her family the simplest account of transactions involving intimacy with Royal personages would be read with intense interest. They would undoubtedly believe that she was having a most delightful time, going about from one palace to another, visiting the Queen at least three times a day and being visited by the Princesses quite as often, drinking tea with gentlemen in Windsor uniform every evening, and being driven about in coaches bearing the Royal arms, by coachmen in scarlet livery !

She wrote nothing to undeceive them. She had set her hand to the plough and she would not look back—at least, if she did look back, it would only be

when no one was looking at her. Nor was she really dissatisfied altogether with her life. To such an instinctive student of men and women as she undoubtedly was, there is a certain satisfaction—a naturalist's interest—in passing new specimens under the microscope; there is a certain joy in dissecting them and noting their characteristics and peculiarities, and this form of interest was certainly hers for some time after her arrival at Windsor. It is only when one reads carefully between the lines of her letters to her relatives that one comes to perceive how much out of place she felt at the homely Kew as well as at the formal St. James's.

A little later, a day came when she was being stung furiously by one of the specimens whom she had the best chance of studying and of whom she has left an account that would satisfy the most exacting student of the genus *vespa*. It does not need any scrutiny between the lines of her records regarding Mrs. Schwellenberg to make us aware of all that she suffered at the hands of this German terror. The breaking strain of her sufferance was reached at this point; and she described Mrs. Schwellenberg without reserve. Mrs. Schwellenberg was one of those objects that are provided by Nature to enable an artist to give their legitimate value to the low tones as well as the high in any pictorial reproduction which he may attempt of a scene before his eyes. But it can scarcely be said that Fanny Burney fully understood the position occupied by this incident in the Royal Pleasance which she was depicting in a thoroughly artist-like

way. She behaved as unreasonably (so we think nowadays, when we look at the matter from the detached standpoint of abstract art) as might a painter who, after putting the last touches to a masterly representation of a thunder-cloud, grumbles loudly because he gets soused before reaching home.

Before referring fully to the relations between Fanny Burney and Mrs. Schwellenberg, it is, however, necessary to refer to some more pleasing matters recorded in the Diary.



**THE PRINCESSES**



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PRINCESSES

FANNY BURNEY had naturally many opportunities of meeting the daughters of George III. and Queen Charlotte. The six Princesses were still under the maternal wing—the nine brothers had gone out into the world, where in due course they made names for themselves, but not exactly as exponents of domesticity. If they loved Handel greatly, they contrived to conceal the fact; they turned their genius for loving toward objects less severe in outline than oratorios with a tendency to become classic. But the six girls remained at “home,” and so long as Fanny Burney was in attendance upon their mother, showed no inclination to depart. It was not until she had severed her connection with the Royal Household that some of them became restive and others enterprising. They got talked about, and when a Princess is talked about the result is called a scandal. Now, ready as people always have shown themselves to gossip about the members of the Royal Family, there never was a time when this natural tendency was yielded to with more malice than during the last years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth, when the scandals were



most rife in regard to two of the Princesses—we cannot think of the affection that existed between the Princess Amelia and Colonel FitzRoy, one of her father's equerries, in the light of a scandal, otherwise we should have to write *three* instead of *two*.

But there is really no evidence that any one of them was guilty of more than a casual indiscretion. The writer of these chapters had in his possession a few years ago a letter written by a lady attached to the Court when one of these scandals was spreading itself abroad, and this document ridiculed the suggestion in a way that would convince any one capable of judging a matter on legitimate evidence, and not on the basis of the irresponsible chatter of scandalmongers, that no foundation for the rumour existed. And yet the merest allusion to the matter in the columns of a magazine was sufficient to cause a visit to be paid to him by a person who claimed to have a very close connection with the indiscretion which had just been proved never to have taken place.

In our own day we have had instances of slanders upon Royalty gaining ground even in the most intelligent circles, although the crudest and most cursory examination of the details of the alleged incidents would have shown that it was impossible they could ever have happened.

We are not conscious of any digression in touching upon this matter in connection with Fanny Burney's account of the young Princesses, for such an *arrière pensée* as is suggested by the hints of some historians of the period—rather more than hints of others—would

go far to destroy the simple charm of the series of pictures of the Princesses which are contained in the pages of her Diary during some interesting years of their lives.

The six girls undoubtedly favoured their father in looks rather than their mother. "Never in tale or fable were there six sister Princesses more lovely," wrote Fanny, when she had had some months' experience of them. They were indeed exceptionally handsome and exceptionally accomplished even in those days of handsome and accomplished women. They spoke several languages and were acquainted with some carefully selected passages from the literature of several countries. Some had a fair knowledge of music—a good deal wider than was possessed by Fanny Burney, the daughter of one of the foremost musicians of the day—and they were also good needlewomen, without showing undue ambition to produce those pictures in silk or tinsel which gave harmless employment and enjoyment to so many young ladies of the period. Happily, it is not recorded against the Princesses that they allowed themselves to be instructed by good Mrs. Delany in her art of paper-flower-making, or that they emulated the taste of their great-grandmother, the illustrious Caroline, who thought all the world of a hat trimmed with feathers in imitation of Brussels lace, though one of them cultivated the art of cutting out silhouetted portraits.

They were well-trained girls, and did not differ from other young ladies of their day in having their reading

carefully chosen for them. One of them was twenty-six when she ventured to ask her mother's leave to read a novel. Fanny Burney has no word to say about them that is not in praise of their good looks and their charming manners. From the Princess Royal, who was twenty, down to the Princess Amelia, who was three, all are referred to as delightful, unaffected, and gracious girls, devoted to their father and mother, and submitting without a murmur to the barrack-yard monotony incidental to their exalted station in life. To any one who is made acquainted with the conditions of their life, the stories referring to the indiscretions of some of them seem not only plausible but pardonable as well; and that is doubtless why they were believed on no more conclusive evidence than that human nature will still be human nature, and if there is no more interesting person at hand than a Royal Equerry, he will seem attractive to the eyes of a Princess of the Blood.

But as they appear in the series of delightful pictures painted by Fanny Burney, there is not one of them that is not simple and charming. They supply the little bits of colour on the somewhat drab *genre* paintings which the pages of the Diary suggest to us—the elements of youth and joy in the midst of all that is elderly and sober. Somehow we feel that Fanny Burney was a good deal younger than her age—not in spite of, but on account of her reputation for prudishness: it is only very young girls whose prudishness calls for remark; and so we can quite realise how these gracious young girls welcomed her



to their circle and were so pleased, as she assures us they were, every time they came in contact with her. She makes but few attempts to differentiate between the elder girls ; but when she has occasion to refer to the youngest, the Princess Amelia, she does so very lovingly, and all the time we are reading what she wrote about the child, we have the impression of looking at one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's pictures of childhood—gentle, caressing, full of vitality, irresistible in her innocence. There is no one of Sir Joshua's children that does not show a willingness to get on affectionate terms with us, and we are conscious of this impression exactly when Fanny Burney brings this dainty little girl before us. Of course, knowing her story—the only story with a touch of pathos and romance in it of all the stories of the family—we are the more interested in these accounts of the childhood of the Princess Amelia—the happy childhood that preceded an unhappy womanhood and an early death.

Fanny Burney met her when the first move to Kew was made, within a week of her entering the Queen's service. The Princess was in the dressing-room with her mother when Fanny was summoned for the afternoon toilette, and she described her as a lovely child, "full of sense, spirit, and playful prettiness ; yet decorous and dignified when called upon to appear *en Princesse* to any strangers, as if conscious of her high rank and of the importance of condescendingly sustaining it. This little Princess, thus in infancy by practice and example taught her own consequence, conducts herself upon all proper occasions with an air

of dignity that is quite astonishing, though her natural character seems all sport and humour."

That mention of the child's assumption of dignity still more strongly suggests one of Sir Joshua's children—it is a touch that increases in a surprising measure the effect of the pathos of childhood in the portrait.

The Queen asked her Robe-keeper to take the little girl downstairs to her father, and the Princess, giving her "a grave and examining look," showed her companion the way into the garden, where the King was waiting for her.

A fortnight later the little Princess's birthday was celebrated. It was an opportune incident. An attempt had just been made by the madwoman, Margaret Nicholson, to stab the King at the moment of his descending from his coach to attend a levée at St. James's Palace. The woman had concealed a knife within the folds of a pretended petition to the King; but she had rehearsed the scene badly, for, instead of holding the folded paper in her left hand, drawing the knife from it with her right, she reversed the action, and was therefore so awkward about it that the King had time to start back, and only when she made a second thrust was his waistcoat touched. He was concerned about the garment, and cried out :

"Has she cut my waistcoat?"

Happily the waistcoat as well as the King's life was spared, but both had had a narrow escape. He explained it all afterward when he got back to Windsor, showing how easily a stab might have been

fatal, "for there was nothing for her to go through except thin linen and fat," he assured the sympathetic circle.

He had behaved with admirable composure upon this trying occasion, protecting the wretched woman from the fury of the crowd, and then holding his levée within the Palace as if nothing had happened. Of course he was the subject of many congratulations, official and otherwise, and the occurrence of the birthday of his youngest daughter—his partiality for her was widely known—appeared to the people of Windsor most opportune in giving them a chance of displaying their loyalty. The consequence was that the Terrace was crowded with the friends and subjects of His Majesty.

All the elements of an effective picture may be found in the bare description of the scene by Fanny Burney, who attended this informal levée by the side of Mrs. Delany's sedan chair. "It was," she wrote, "a mighty pretty procession. The little Princess, just turned of three years old, in a robe coat covered with fine muslin, a dress close cap, white gloves and a fan, walked on alone and first, highly delighted in the parade, and turning from side to side to see everybody as she passed. . . . Then followed the King and Queen, no less delighted themselves with the joy of their little darling." In due order came the Princess Royal, the Princess Augusta, the Princess Elizabeth, the Princess Mary, and the Princess Sophia, each attended by a member of the Household.



And then comes a touch of something more than picturesqueness in the description of the scene ; for on the King and Queen stopping to talk to Mrs. Delany, the little girl who headed the procession in all her childish finery turned about and ran up to greet the venerable lady, which she did "behaving like a little angel to her," and later turning to Fanny herself, who whispered that she was afraid her Royal Highness would not remember her.

"And what think you was her answer?" Fanny asks. "An arch little smile, and a nearer approach, with her lips pouted out to kiss me."

Miss Burney so far forgot her place and the etiquette of the situation as to accept the innocent invitation ; if it seemed in so public a place an improper liberty for her to take, there was no help for it ; the thing was done, and if it was to be visited upon her head afterward by any official of the Court, she could only submit to his jurisdiction and make an appeal for clemency. Happily, the untoward incident was overlooked, and the King and Queen walked on, followed by the Princesses, all of whom made curtsies to Miss Burney.

Thackeray, when publishing his "Four Georges" lecture in *Cornhill*, referred happily to this scene on the Terrace ; but he said nothing about the matter that must have been very close to every one who saluted the King. He does not suggest what was the topic that was discussed in whispers down the long line of people standing close to the wall while the procession passed—the recent escape of His

Majesty from the knife of the assassin. Every one must have been talking of this or thinking of this, when out stepped from the door of the Queen's Lodge the toddling figure of the little lady, a few yards ahead of the father of whom she had so nearly been deprived. There must have been many wet eyes on the Terrace that summer afternoon when the band struck up "God save the King," and the guard turned out to stand with their muskets at the present ; but more when the child of three was making her curtsy to the venerable lady of eighty-six, and then offering her pouting lips to be kissed by—whom? was the question that must have been whispered. "What, Miss Burney—the author of *Evelina*?"

Miss Burney had suffered somewhat through her acceptance of service at the hands of the Queen, but her feelings at that moment must have gone far to compensate her for what she had lost by the transaction.

The attachment to her formed by this child seemed to increase daily, and it was now and again a source of embarrassment to her. When at Kew the Princess insisted on having tea in her room, and promised to do so always. A little latter she refused to go to bed unless her dear Miss Burney undressed her — once her nurse came to Miss Burney with this story, and a short time afterward the King himself smilingly brought the same message. He was also commanded to leave the room by his imperious little daughter because his entrance had interrupted a romp through which she was piloting her Miss Burney. Very sweet too is the story told in the Diary of the little



Princess's adding to her evening prayers, of her own accord, a petition for the recovery of Mrs. Delany, who was ill: "Please, God, make Lany well again."

The elder sisters had also a great regard for Fanny, but it was naturally tempered by knowledge. They undoubtedly found her a good deal more interesting than the majority of the Royal entourage, and in the intolerable dullness of their lives they looked for relief to their mother's Robe-keeper. We hear of a message being brought to her one day that the Princesses Mary and Sophia were at Mrs. Delany's house and requested her presence immediately. This message was, however, brought to her by her servant John, who was a marvel of stupidity, mixed with presumption, so she thought it prudent to write to Mrs. Delany's companion to ask what the message really was, and the answer was returned promptly that the two Princesses wanted extremely to become acquainted with her, and had been complaining that they "never had a chance of seeing her, though the Princess Amelia did so frequently."

It would have been impossible for any one to resist so flattering an appeal, so Miss Burney went to them without delay. When she arrived she found them silent and apparently ashamed, though why they should have been so it is impossible to say.

The three eldest Princesses had their charms succinctly defined by Fanny. She referred to them as she might have done to the Three Graces—or as Dryden did to the "Three poets in three distant ages born," only she was not so epigrammatic. "They



were indeed uncommonly handsome, each in their different way," she wrote when dealing with their appearance fully dressed for a birthday; "the Princess Royal for figure, the Princess Augusta for countenance, and the Princess Elizabeth for face." The distinction between the charms of the two last named is too subtle to be fully appreciated in these days of careless criticism.

The eldest of the sisters was gracious to her from the first, and so was the Princess Elizabeth, even before she was aware of the Princess's identity. She describes how, within the first few days of her entering upon her duties, she was in Mrs. Schwollenberg's room drinking tea with the equerries, when "the door opened and a young lady entered, upon whose appearance all the company rose and retreated a few paces backward, with looks of high respect. She advanced to Mrs. Schwollenberg and desired her to send a basin of tea into the music-room for Mrs. Delany: then walking up to me, with a countenance of great sweetness, she said, 'I hope you are very well, Miss Burney?' I only curtsied, and knew not till she left the room, which was as soon as she had spoken a few words to Major Price, that this was the Princess Elizabeth."

A pretty picture, too, she draws of the first appearance of the fifth of the six daughters, who in 1786 was just eleven years of age. The Queen was in the habit of leaving her little dog in charge of Miss Burney, on going to prayers, and this day the page had carried off the dog, leaving the basket

behind. The Princess called for this basket, and when Fanny was about to carry it for her to the Queen's room, would not allow her to do so, but took it away in her own hands. Shortly afterward she returned with some German books, accompanying the Princess Royal, and they remained for some time labelling the volumes and chatting away. The Princess Royal also insisted on carrying the books back to the Queen, cumbersome though they were. Indeed, during the whole period of Miss Burney's five years' attendance there was no change in the bearing of these Royal girls toward her. Particularly during her illnesses were they unremitting in their attention to her ; so that it is not surprising that she should feel as deeply attached to them as did, in later years, the beautiful Mrs. Gwyn, the wife of Colonel Gwyn, one of the equerries. Fanny Burney was not content to refer to their courtesy and gracious manner in a general way, she gave instance after instance of their unaffected graciousness, and no one can read these entries in the Diary without the deepest pity for them all ; for none of the six could be said to have attained happiness even through one of those by-paths by which Royalty now and again may attain its heart's desire.

**A GALLERY OF PORTRAITS**





## CHAPTER XIV

### A GALLERY OF PORTRAITS

IF any young novelist—or for that matter, any old novelist—were at a loss for fresh “characters” he could hardly do better than apply to Fanny Burney. In that part of her Diary which deals with the days preceding her acquaintance with the Queen as well as in her record of her life when Keeper of the Robes, one finds full-length portraits as well as kit-cats and miniatures of scores of people whose character and whose personality are depicted with a skill that enables us to perceive on how sound a basis her fame as a novelist was built. Her thumbnail sketches, so to speak, are not less highly finished than her complete portraits. A man or woman has but to cross her path—one of the many corridors of the Windsor Lodge or the Kew barrack—for a single hour to allow of her jotting down the result of her observation—her imaginative insight into his or her character. We are not greatly concerned with the question of the accuracy of all her sketches of the nonentities on whom she conferred individuality; we are only disposed to regard them as we do the “Portrait of a Lady” which appears on the walls of every gallery: if the breath of life has been breathed

into it every sketch will be interesting ; and whether she was right or wrong in her estimate of the people whom she drew, there is assuredly the warmth of life in every one of them. A touch reveals the personality of some of them, and gives each a distinctiveness, not to say a distinction, that is the be-all and the end-all of true portraiture.

She could have made a score of novels out of the characters with which she came in contact during her years at Court ; but unfortunately that bane of "good taste," which has prevented many novelists from doing the work which they were most capable of doing, stood in her way, so that we are, we think, poorer to-day by many a work of eighteenth-century fiction, if we are the richer by a *Diary* of interest even when it deals with uninteresting people : only a writer of imagination and resource can arouse the interest of a reader when demonstrating how uninteresting certain characters can be. It has always seemed to us that it was her consciousness of this power that enabled Fanny Burney to spend five years waiting for the tinkle of the Queen's bell. The knowledge that she was compiling a chronicle such as had never before been compiled was her salvation, even though it was only meant for the eyes of her own family—the unalterable canon of good taste would prevent her from looking forward to its reception by the world.

When one day it dawned on some of the slow-moving intelligences which surrounded her that she would put them into a book, there was consternation



within the circle. It naturally took them some time to realise this hideous possibility. Some of them tried to laugh away their fears, others in bravado offered her the copyright, as it were, of their individuality, telling her that she might do her worst; and when *Camilla* was published years afterward, we have no doubt that the survivors of the society of the ante-room were greatly disappointed to find that she had ignored them all—or rather that she had ignored the opportunity of “showing up” their neighbours against whom they bore one of the usual grudges that flourish luxuriantly in ante-room society.

When, later still, the announcement was made that the Diary was to be published, there was greater consternation than before within the Royal circle. One of the Royal Dukes at least looked for “revelations”—and this incident gives us a hint as to the reticence which unhappily “good taste” enforced upon Fanny Burney in writing up her journals—and he was annoyed to find nothing that could be so described in its pages—amazed and relieved to find that the worst that Miss Burney had done was to be “too hard on old Schwellenberg.”

One of the most carefully drawn of all her personages was a Madame de la Fite, who was one of the “Readers”—it seems as if the office of “Reader” was conferred as a sort of *Regium donum* upon people whose needs could not be relieved through the usual eleemosynary channels. She was a lady whose qualities of “gush” were only equalled by her persistency and her imperviousness to snubs—one of

those persons whose praise of another is so indiscriminate as to defeat its own ends, setting up the back of every one into whose ears it is poured against the subject of the eulogy. The Queen told Fanny that she had been greatly prejudiced against her on account of the way Madame de la Fite had rhapsodised about her ; but this confidence was not given until Fanny had showed the Queen that she herself thoroughly understood the lady's peculiarities. But Madame de la Fite was understood by every one in the ante-chamber. She had met Fanny at first at the Streathfields', then at Norbury Park, where she got up a reading of a play of her friend, Madame de Genlis, for her benefit, which Fanny appreciated so heartily that Madame de la Fite left the house shedding floods of tears to be compelled to part from so delightful a friend.

The threads of this friendship were, however, quickly taken up again when Miss Burney came to Windsor. She was impatient to be her first visitor, and called every day, writing at intervals, until her persistence was rewarded, and she spent some time telling Fanny all she could about Mrs. Haggerdorn. Still she kept calling, seeming to be determined that every one should know that she was Miss Burney's patroness, and doubtless hinting—we have many hints to induce such a surmise—that it was to her good offices Miss Burney owed her appointment, though it was really through her officiousness that Miss Burney very nearly missed it.

When Fanny called to return her visit, she kept her

so long that, as we have already mentioned, she was late in her attendance upon the Queen. It is not necessary to refer to the number or the insistency of the appearances of this lady by the side of the unfortunate Miss Burney. "My constant Madame de la Fite," she calls her, with great reason. She could have got on well enough with a lapse now and again into inconstancy on the part of Madame de la Fite. When the attempt was made upon the life of the King, this person is at the door of the ante-room with flowing eyes and uplifted hands. "O mon Dieu! O le bon Roi! Oh, Miss Beurney, what an horreur!" she cries. She was just the one who should have been absent upon such an occasion.

Fanny becomes impatient at the frequency of her visits. "She calls upon me almost daily, though I can scarce speak to her for a moment," she complains, and in steps the woman again to ask permission to present Monsieur Aimé Argand, the inventor of the lamp-burner that bears his name. Well, Monsieur Argand comes, and his introducer, who has for long been trying to get Fanny to correspond with Madame de Genlis, says that Monsieur will wait upon that lady on his return to Paris and tell her that he has seen Madame de la Fite and Miss Burney together, and surely Miss Burney will not refuse Monsieur Argand the happiness of carrying two lines from one lady so celebrated to another.

Now Miss Burney felt that the reputation of Madame de Genlis, apart from her connection with literature, was such as made the entering on a corre-



spondence with her indiscreet, and she knew besides, that if she were to do so through Madame de la Fite "her indiscreet zeal for us both would lead her to tell her successful mediation to everybody she could make hear her. . . . Not content with continual importunity to me to write ever since my arrival, which I have evaded as gently as possible . . . she has now written to Madame de Genlis that I am here belonging to the same Royal Household as herself; and then came to tell me, that as we were now so closely connected, she proposed our writing jointly, in the same letter."

Poor Fanny should have been spared the infliction of such a friendship. But she had tact enough to save herself from the consequences of what might be regarded by the Powers as a grave indiscretion. She hastened to Mrs. Delany for advice, and Mrs. Delany told her to lay her case before the Queen. With infinite faltering, many pauses and continual hesitation, she managed to let the Royal lady know of her difficulty, and the latter, with such tact as Fanny could never hope to exceed, advised her that as she had not already begun to write to the witty Frenchwoman, she would do well to refrain from doing so, assigning as a reason the number of her engagements.

But Madame de la Fite was not to be snubbed. In she marches a few days later to say that she had invited Madame de la Roche, a lady who enjoyed the distinction of having been the first love of the poet Wieland, to Windsor to meet her "*chère Miss*

Beurney." Then Fanny found it necessary to put her foot down. It was in vain that her visitor declared that if she did not so favour her she must be covered with disgrace; Fanny answered firmly that to give her permission was quite out of her power. "And why?—and wherefore?—and what for?" cried the insistent person. "Surely for Madame de la Roche! *une femme d'esprit*—mon amie—l'amie de Madame de Genlis——"

The Queen's bell rang and the Robe-keeper, half disrobed herself, rushed out of the room to answer it.

The woman was too much for Fanny. She walked in the next day and was followed by Madame de la Roche, and then Fanny learned that the pair had never met before in all their lives! They flung themselves each into the other's arms with cries of, "Ma digne amie!—est il possible?—te vois-je?" and before they had quite exhausted themselves all the *embrassades* were transferred to "*La digne Miss Borni!—l'auteur de 'Cecile' ? d' 'Evelina' ?—non, ce n'est pas possible!—suis-je si heureuse! oui, je le vois à ses yeux!—Ah! que de bonheur!*" &c.

And yet Fanny, while impatient of such demonstrations, can still write justly of both these ladies: "I fairly believe they are both good women and both believe themselves sincere."

Madame de la Roche told her that she had already seen some of the sights of England—Bedlam, Lord George Gordon, the famous rioter, and Cagliostro! Surely the nation had little more to offer her. It

is to be feared that, after these sights, little Miss Burney must have seemed *très petite*.

But we soon discover that it was not to see "Miss Borni," but to be seen by her, that Madame de la Roche had come to Windsor. She called on the next Sunday and told Fanny the story of her life—of the beautiful love that Mr. Wieland bore for her, and how he had tried to console himself for having failed to win her by throwing himself at the feet of an actress, and then of her meeting him again, *à la Charlotte*, when she was the mother of three children!

It was a beautiful story, and was "told in so touching and pathetic a manner . . . that I could scarcely believe I was not actually listening to a Clelia or a Cassandra recounting the stories of her youth," wrote Fanny.

There is no doubt that Madame de la Roche was a woman of imagination and possessed a good working knowledge of the elements of a narrative of the *genre* of *The Sorrows of Werther*.

Madame de la Fite did a little in the romancing line herself. She it was, as Fanny heard afterward, who spread abroad a report that the distinguished author of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* was the heroine of a very pretty love story. This was when she met Fanny Burney at Norbury; but not content with that—which, by the way, reached the Queen's ear—this foolish flighty Frenchwoman must needs write a book describing how she met the charming Miss Burney, with the result that they fell in love with each other at the first glance.



When this book found its way to Windsor without Miss Burney's knowing of its existence, there was some very good fun made of it among the equerries and others of the Household. Mr. Guiffardièrè began it by saying gravely that he was about to ride to Norbury Park to see the spot—the very spot where Madame de la Fite first beheld Miss Burney.

“I must see the very—the identical piece of earth—I shall want no one to tell me what it is—I must needs feel it by inspiration,” cried this *farceur*.

Fanny thought him suddenly bereft of his senses ; but his story of the book had to be confirmed by Miss Planta before Fanny could believe it. The finishing touch in the ridiculous account of the meeting at Norbury Park was in the bestowal of a title upon Mr. and Mrs. Locke : she wrote alluding to them as “Lord and Lady Locke”!

So she went on with her affectations until Fanny retired from the service of the Queen, trying to introduce her friends to Miss Burney, and becoming *triste* and reproachful when the latter evaded her attentions—never losing an opportunity of gushing, and so making Fanny feel dreadfully uncomfortable when in the presence of other people. Could anything show a finer power of observation than the concluding sentence of one entry regarding this lady? She approached Fanny in a roomful of equerries and visitors, crying, “*Ma chère Mademoiselle Beurni!—ma très chère amie!*” &c. “Yet all the time,” continued the observant Diarist, “far from being betrayed involuntarily into this ecstasy, her eye roved so round

to all the company, to see if they witnessed her rapture, that she truly never found a moment to examine how its object received it!"

Undoubtedly this Madame de la Fite served to keep Fanny Burney's sense of comedy from being dormant under conditions that tended somewhat to this end.

Naturally, the persons who were pleasanter characters to meet do not afford a reader of the Diary the same entertainment as do those whose characteristics were more strongly marked. But it is really surprising how few of them can be called colourless when they pass under the hand of this admirable artist. The gentleman to whom she introduces us as "Mr. Turbulent"—he was the Rev. Charles de Guiffardière, one of the Readers—cannot, however, be said to need the exercise of any subtle skill of description to bring him before us. Macaulay calls him "half-witted," and this fact proves with what carelessness Macaulay read the matter which served him as an excuse for writing one of Macaulay's Essays. It would be to insult the power of discrimination of the great essayist as well as the power of description of the great Diarist to affirm that this "Mr. Turbulent" exhibited any of the qualities of the half-witted; and assuredly Fanny never meant to suggest that he was mentally deficient. On the contrary, even when he was teasing her and behaving as a schoolboy is expected to do when on a holiday, she never ceases to appreciate his ability. His fooling is the fooling of a man who knows what he

is about ; it is never the fooling of a fool. But every one knows now that Macaulay's sole aim was to exhibit the cleverness of Macaulay, when he was not bludgeoning a political opponent—an operation in which he showed greater skill than he did in his sword practice.

The very complete account which Fanny Burney gives of the course of Mr. Guiffardière's argument when they were discussing a question of femininity is one of the most interesting entries in all the Diary, and certainly one of the most highly intellectual. It would be difficult to imagine a more lucid or more forcible contention than that which she attributes to him when "he protested that many of the women we were proscribing were amongst the most amiable of the sex—that the fastidiousness we recommended is never practised by even the best part of the world—and that we ourselves, individually, while we spoke with so much disdain, never acted up to our doctrines by using, towards all fair failers, such severity."

Upon other occasions this "Mr. Turbulent" could be so epigrammatic in the Johnson style as to remind Fanny very strongly of her old friend and admirer. Referring to Walpole's turgid tragedy, *The Mysterious Mother*, Macaulay's half-witted clergyman remarked that the author had "chosen a plan of which nothing can equal the abomination but the absurdity." Again Fanny Burney mentions his having "supported a conversation extremely instructive and lively . . . with a fullness of memory and knowledge that taught me very highly to respect his abilities and acquirements."



He was unquestionably a most brilliant man, and the Diary is very insistent on this point, although the Diarist, with her usual frankness on such points, states that there was something about him, or something about her, that prevented her assimilating with him in anything. He was, however, always her friend, even when he was teasing her, as he did when alone with her in the coach on the way to London, about her being a "mere philosopher" and not sound on the question of "revealed religion." Once he nearly succeeded in establishing a *rapprochement* between her and himself, on account of his telling the King something that Fanny did not believe was known outside her own family—an extremely benevolent action that had been done by her brother Charles. (One had only to say something good about her father or a brother or a sister to become her friend.) On meeting "Mr. Turbulent" the next day she admits that she was gracious to him for the first time. Subsequently they seem to have relapsed into their old relations, which may best be described as founded on mutual admiration of an intellectual type.

It is our knowledge of how distasteful he was to her, and yet of the freedom with which she acknowledges his abilities and records the good things that were said of him by other people, from the Queen down, that convinces us that we can place our trust implicitly in her Diary. We cannot but feel that she is absolutely fair in all her references to the people about her. In reading such a work one need not fear being misled by the judgments of the writer

respecting people in whose favour she was prejudiced. What we have to be careful about accepting is all that is said about people for whom the writer had some animosity. We have, however, scores of instances of Fanny Burney's fairness on every hand. Her work is a notable example of the triumph of an artistic instinct over personal prejudice. Hence its great value as a chronicle. She had to turn "Mr. Turbulent" out of the room several times—always with a good grace, of course—and she petitioned the Queen to make him travel in the coach with the equerries rather than with herself; and yet she has written nothing about him that we could interpret to his discredit. She makes us like him and, moreover, feel that she liked him to the end, though his boisterousness got on her nerves.

Who, for instance, could fail to like a man who could behave with such *insouciance* as he showed in regard to the Princess Royal when all the people in the room were frozen into statues of Etiquette—hinged for genuflection—on her entering one day on an errand for the Queen? When the Princess was speaking to Fanny, he stood behind and exclaimed *à demi-voix*, as if to himself, "*Comme elle est jolie, ce soir, son Altesse Royale!*" And then, seeing her blush, he clasped his hands, in pretended confusion, hiding his head and saying, "Que ferai-je? The Princess has heard me."

Then comes the record of a scene which amazed the chronicler—there is a *horresco referens* in every line in her record—for on the Princess asking him what

play he intended reading to them that night and his archly suggesting *La Coquette Corrigée*, she replied with a laugh that she wanted no French plays at all, and was leaving the room, when he got between her and the door, and declined to allow her to depart until she had cleared herself of the slur which he said would be cast upon her good taste for coming to such a decision. She begged Miss Burney to pull him away from the door, and he bowed, hinting that Miss Burney was welcome to make the attempt. So this amazing scene of badinage went on until, in a low voice, he asked her if she would like a Danish play read, the allusion being to her possible marriage with the Prince Royal of Denmark. "She coloured violently," Miss Burney tells us, and called out, "Mr. Turbulent, how can you be such a fool!" He bowed to the ground, but did not let her go at once; but in a few moments he had her in a good humour again, and she ran off, with a laughing reply to his suggestion that, after all, *La Coquette Corrigée* would form an appropriate reading for the evening.

"What say you to Mr. Turbulent now?" cries the chronicler.

Well, we know exactly what criticism to pass upon the man who had originality enough and daring enough to evolve a scene of fun and badinage out of such unpromising materials and with so forbidding a *mise-en-scène*. The young Princess must have glowed after so bright an incident in the colourless life that she was compelled to live among the fogies of the buckram Court. Fanny knew that perfectly well.



“For myself, I own, when I perceived in him this mode of conduct with the Princess, I saw his flights, and his rattling and his heroics, in a light of innocent play, from exuberance of high spirits; and I looked upon them, and upon him, in a fairer light.”

The truth was that this unconventional clergyman was a born *farceur*; and the demure Miss Burney had good reason for getting impatient with him on another occasion, when, on the Queen's back being turned upon them in her own room, he began making signs to the Robe-keeper with his eyebrows, the significance of which she could not fail to understand. “He practises a thousand mischievous tricks to confuse me in the Royal presence,” she complains, and with great justice too. But all the same she makes us like this Mr. de Guiffardière, whom she not inappropriately renamed “Mr. Turbulent.”



2

A ROOMFUL OF COLONELS





## CHAPTER XV

### A ROOMFUL OF COLONELS

**A**MONG the members of the Queen's entourage to whom Fanny Burney refers under a name of her own making was Colonel Stephen Digby, the Vice-Chamberlain to the Queen: she calls him "Colonel Fairly." He was a man of forty-four, and married to a daughter of the Earl of Ilchester. He was constantly in the room with the equerries, and shared with them the privilege of having tea in Mrs. Schwellenberg's apartment. He was one of those men whom Miss Burney admired by reason of their sterling, stolid merit, though upon the occasion of their first meeting he ran the risk of offending her for some words he let drop respecting her friend Mrs. Hastings, the wife of Warren Hastings, whose strongest partisan she remained during his persecution and trial. The general impression that prevails nowadays is that Warren Hastings was immolated in order to exhibit the oratorical powers of Burke and Sheridan; and this impression may not be so far from the truth. Warren Hastings was not so much a great Empire-builder as a strong man with an iron hand who had snatched a great Empire out of the flames of anarchy. But about his wife, who had been divorced by her

husband when Hastings married her, there may be a second opinion; and Colonel Digby said unreservedly that he thought it a pity that a newspaper should have mentioned her name in the same paragraph with the name of the Queen.

Fanny Burney said nothing, whatever she may have thought, but her Senior, Mrs. Schwollenberg, began to abuse Colonel Digby so vehemently in her broken English for daring to say a word against the lady, that Fanny had no temptation to interpose a word. Later Mrs. Schwollenberg told her that she meant to force him to produce the papers on which he had founded an opinion adverse to Mrs. Hastings; and Fanny made up her mind to warn him of this, in the interests of peace and quiet. She had no chance of doing so, however, before Digby had to leave Windsor owing to the serious illness of his wife, who a few months later died of cancer.

When Fanny next saw Colonel Digby he had become a changed man, with white hair and a forlorn expression of countenance. His conversation corresponded with his appearance. It was very cheerless; but Miss Burney, with the appreciation of an artist, perceived how well the dialogue suited the situation, and she seemed to enjoy her own appreciation of it; though she felt a little shocked that anyone should become so despairing as to hold, as this gentleman said he did, that life was so unsatisfying a thing that one might be pardoned for releasing oneself from its burdens but for the "canon 'gainst self-slaughter."



He was never a very cheerful kind of person, and his conversation was usually of that "improving" type which was greatly in favour a hundred years ago, though latterly its popularity has waned. It is certain that Fanny liked conversations with a high moral tone—we might almost say, a high-flown moral tone—and her respect for Colonel Digby never decreased until, perhaps, he had married again. It was from him she had learned within the first few days of their meeting what she must expect from her colleague, Mrs. Schwollenberg, and she undoubtedly found the warning useful.

The only incident with some humour in it which is related in connection with Colonel Digby had reference to the gossip that was flying about suggesting that Miss Charlotte Gunning, a Maid of Honour, was about to console this worthy widower, and the rumour drew to the ante-room several of the Queen's ladies who had daughters fully qualified to discharge the duties which Miss Gunning would have to relinquish on her marriage. Fanny was amused, and remarked that all the hopes of the aspirants were based on the likelihood of the death or the marriage of one of the Maids of Honour; but none of them seemed disposed to oblige their anxiously waiting friends.

It would be interesting to know what thoughts came into her mind one evening when they had, paradoxically, a chance of talking together in quiet, the room being so crowded, and he asked her what her opinions were relative to second marriages—if

she thought any second attachment could either be as strong or as happy as a first.

But she had tact. She was quite unprepared to answer such a question, as she did not know with what feelings or intentions "I might war by any unwary opinion. I did little therefore but evade and listen, though he kept up the discourse in a very animated manner till the party broke up."

This was quite discreet on the part of Miss Burney, for Colonel Digby was barely ten years older than herself. But whatever thoughts may have come into her mind that night are not recorded; and after all Colonel Digby married Miss Gunning, and Fanny was not a little shocked that a gentleman of so highly religious a tone should consent to the ceremony's taking place in a drawing-room and not in a church. The account that she got of this wedding was extremely humorous. The bride's family were sitting about the drawing-room as usual after dinner, the ladies working at their embroidery or knitting, when the clergyman said he was ready; but never before having conducted a wedding in a room, he scarcely knew how to proceed. They managed, however, to get a table—the clergyman hoped it was not a card table—to take the place of an altar, the ladies—doubtless when they had got to the end of their "row" with the needles—put away their work and grouped themselves behind the bride, who smiled quite pleasantly, though her sister went into hysterics. After the ceremony the happy pair drove away, and the remainder of the party went to the

play-house, where "Much Ado About Nothing" was appropriately performed, showing Benedick a married man.

Miss Burney had the satisfaction of welcoming Mrs. Digby a week later, but she had no more long sententious conversations with the excellent Colonel, though she occasionally met him in the ordinary course of her duties. During the months that preceded his marriage, however, she was, as will be seen in due course, a great deal in his company—quite enough to suggest that in seeking for consolation in his morbid moments he had some thought of appealing to Miss Burney rather than to the lady whom he married.

Another of the King's equerries she names "Mr. Welbred." He was Colonel Robert Fulke Greville, and she describes him as gifted with a figure that was "very elegant," and with features that were "very handsome." But, better than these outward qualities, he was possessed of modesty, good-breeding and intelligence—for an equerry, she possibly meant. That tormenting "Mr. Turbulent" was pleased to make his introduction to Fanny the groundwork of one of his innumerable farces. He started by demanding of her to know when she was going to ask Colonel Greville to tea, and on her protesting that she had not the honour of his acquaintance, he said he would go and fetch him at once; when she demurred, he insisted on her telling him what objection she had to the gentleman; and so on, day after day in this mischievous spirit, went the silly



comedy; and it turned out that when he was not teasing Fanny in this way, he was annoying the Colonel, asking him how it was he had not presented himself before Miss Burney to share the delights of tea-drinking in her room.

Pages of the Diary are devoted to the introduction of "Mr. Welbred," and the descriptions of every scene are as admirable as the introductory conversations in a comedy by Augier or Sardou; the only difference between them is that in the comedy they lead to something, but in the Diary they only serve to make a reader aware of the paucity of incidents in the life of the ante-room. There are plenty of Colonels, but neither scandal nor intrigue. It seems a dreadful waste of good material. But that is only because we think of Fanny Burney as a writer of novels, and into the composition of novels of reality the element of "good taste" (as expounded by Fanny Burney) is not expected to enter. Her Colonels in the Diary might be the falsetti of a Turkish harem, for all the potentiality of intrigue there is in them. With a pretty fair knowledge of the machinery of the Court a little later, however—when Miss Burney was living in retirement with a French officer for her husband—we are disposed to think that during her years in the ante-room she found her defective eyesight a very good excuse for not seeing some of the incidents that are inevitable in an establishment composed of some young women and several Colonels of very elegant figures.

But once "Mr. Welbred" justified his existence,

and Miss Burney must have felt grateful to her "Mr. Turbulent" for introducing him even without her consent; for it was he who noticed how inconvenient it was for her to have a bell-pull only in her bedroom and none in her sitting-room. Fanny had applied to one of the domestic surveyors to have a second bell-pull, but he had declared that it would be as much as his place would be worth to make so radical a change unless by the direct orders of the King. But when this impetuous Colonel took up the business he carried it through with the ardour of a Prince Rupert, and Fanny was left amazed at his daring—"amazement" is actually the word that she uses.

Her confidence in his resource induced her to beg of him to try to devise some means for retaining in the Royal Household a certain Major Price, who was retiring from his post on the ground of ill-health. But the Colonel could only suggest the establishment of the office of Backgammon Player to His Majesty. (The fame of Major Price at the backgammon board had travelled through the length and breadth of every palace in the kingdom.) Major Price, however, was not retained, and greatly to Fanny's regret, returned to his farm in Herefordshire; but he did not stamp his name so indelibly upon the page of history as to give anyone ground for assuming that he placed the game of backgammon on a more stable basis in the Border Counties.

"Colonel Welbred" marches through the pages of the Diary for some time, always maintaining his

“elegant figure” and intelligence; and on one occasion he rose to the height of recounting the speech of a courtier of incomparable adulation. It came from “a foreign lady of distinction” who had been walking with the King on the Terrace. She rejoiced in the fineness of the day, which indeed she said “was so perfect, it was easy to see who had ordered it!” The King proved himself to be another Canute, in sense, at least, for he turned round and repeated the words to his equerries.

The evening that was marked by the telling of this story was made notable by many incidents. The King sent for Colonel Ramsden, who was in the tea-room, to play backgammon with him, and Colonel Goldsworthy, laughing at the other being interrupted at his dish of tea, cried “Happy, happy man!” and was complacently settling himself down to a comfortable meal when the Royal summons came for him also. “What, already!” he cried, “without even my tea! Why, this is worse and worse!—No peace in Israel!”

“Off he went,” continues the Diary; “but presently, in a great rage, came back, and while he drank a hot dish of tea which I instantly presented him, kept railing at his stars for ever bringing him under a Royal roof. ‘If it had not been for a puppy,’ cried he, ‘I had never got off even to scald my throat in this manner! But they’ve just got a dear little new ugly dog; so one puppy gave way to t’other, and I just left them to kiss and hug it while I stole off to drink this tea! But this is too much!—no peace in Israel!’”



Then the conversation turned upon Herschel and his discovery of volcanoes in the moon. It must ever be a source of regret that the astronomer published the result of his observations and investigations of the satellite, for it shattered the confidence that had been placed in him up to this point by one Colonel Manners, "a tall and extremely handsome young man," who was among the equerries. "As to Herschel," he cried, "I liked him well enough till he came to his volcanoes in the moon; and then I gave him up: I saw that he was just like the rest. How should he know anything of the matter? There is no such thing as pretending to measure at such a distance as that."

Every one seemed to perceive how regrettable it was that Herschel should have forfeited the goodwill of Colonel Manners; but a little later "Colonel Welbred" remarked that the wisest and best of people were little appreciated by their contemporaries, adding that he did not doubt that Herschel would one day be as highly honoured as Newton. "Colonel Welbred" was undoubtedly a philosopher, if his colleague seems the more amusing in Miss Burney's accounts of the scientific dialogues of the ante-room. The very mention of the word "volcano" caused one of Manners's eruptions, so that somebody took good care to introduce the topic upon every possible occasion for the sake of the excitement. It must have been amusing to hear this self-satisfied young officer proclaim Herschel and De Luc and "the rest of them" a pack of charlatans. The moment any of

them chanced to see a bonfire on the top of a hill they took it for a volcano, he affirmed.

It is plain that Manners had a pretty conceit of himself, for he inquired if Miss Burney had heard him sing in church. It had escaped her attention, she said; and he forthwith asked Goldsworthy for a candid criticism of his rendering of a Psalm (which he took to be a hymn).

Goldsworthy replied that he did it pretty well, adding, "Now and again you run me a little into 'God save the King.'" And the other, after some reflection, said that that was probably because he knew "God save the King" better than any other tune.

"A happy mistake to make so near their Majesties," remarked Fanny.

Very little encouragement made this egregious gentleman give the company an example of his vocalism. He attempted an anthem, but did it so horribly that every one was roaring with laughter. A lady had, however, only to ask him for another, and he forthwith launched into "Care, thou bane of love and joy" with such "shocking discordant and unmeaning sounds, that nothing in a farce could be more risible; in defiance, however, of all interruptions, he continued till he had finished one stanza, when Colonel Goldsworthy called out: 'There—there's enough!—have mercy! Thank you—but I won't trouble you for more—I'll not hear another word.'

Then "Colonel Welbred" pretended to give this

simpleton instructions for executing a shake—"a shake with the voice, such as singers make," it was explained to him; and before the lesson was over the audience was "nearly demolished."

Among all this group of gentlemen in livery Greville is the one of whom she writes in admiration. But she is so frank in her references to him that no one could scarcely suggest that she had any tender feeling for him. This, at any rate, was what was in her mind; for it must not be forgotten that this part of the Diary was not addressed to the "Nobody" for whom her earlier journals were meant; it was written with a view of being read by her father and sisters; so, frank though she undoubtedly was, it would be absurd to believe that she was unreservedly frank: there are limits to the confidences of every sensible woman, and thus we should not like to do her the injustice to take it for granted that even during her residence among the people who are only made interesting by reason of her literary treatment of them, she had no moment of tender thought for one of the men. She had no doubt been cautioned by her father, by Mrs. Delany, by the Lockes, and perhaps by the Queen herself, upon the necessity for discretion at all times, but especially when thrown among the equerries. She had probably been told that these gentlemen had been so accustomed to find themselves face to face only with Mrs. Schwellenberg and Mrs. Haggerdorn, that they might become demoralised by the appearance of some one who was younger and better



favoured, so that it would be absolutely necessary for her to be always on her guard.

And she was certainly a pattern of discretion ; but every one knows, without having given more time to the study of volcanic impulses than did Colonel Manners, that a crater which is thought to be extinct may now and again break forth into flame, and even a woman of thirty-six, with a reputation for discretion to preserve untarnished, may prove herself to be very much alive indeed. Only some one who meant to be very hard upon Fanny Burney would venture to assert that because she gives no hint of it in her Diary, she had therefore no dream of being able to console her " Mr. Fairly " for the loss of his first wife, or some hope that her " Mr. Welbred " might think of her unofficially when his term of waiting had ended. We suspect such possibilities by reason of the very frankness with which she writes of them—disarming frankness, she meant it to be. She laughs when she is telling how she referred to one of them as her beau—" Mr. Turbulent " has just been saying that he was the man for a *belle*, alluding in an obvious pun to his good service done on her behalf—and she gives a little simper, we think, when she tells of the badinage of the same annoying person in coupling her name with Greville's.

Now it would be as ridiculous to assert that these trifles would bear to be considered as any evidence that an attachment existed between her and the man as it would be to say that they prove conclusively that such a possibility had never suggested itself to her.

It is not going far in defining her position to say that she was now and again on the brink of an attachment—all women are on the brink every day of their life—but more it would be impossible to say of Fanny Burney in respect of her associates in the King's livery. She did not fall in love with any of them ; but she proved some years later that she was woman enough to cast discretion to the winds when a man told her he loved her. He was penniless, a foreigner, and a Catholic, and she was forty-one years of age ; but she was ready with the ardour of a girl to throw herself into his arms without having obtained the consent of her father ; and it appears to us that the woman who could act thus at forty-one could not at thirty-six have looked on colonels with "elegant figures," displayed to great advantage in the Royal livery, with no warmer feelings than would have been hers if they had been carved out of marble.

That is the nearest approach to the fashioning of a love story for Fanny Burney that one can legitimately make from studying the pages of her Diary during the five years of her service with the Queen.

But what we should greatly like to possess to-day is the diary of some one who had access to the equerries' room during the same period. We are certain that the comments of these gentlemen upon the Junior Robe-keeper would form very entertaining reading. We do not think that the members of the Royal staff ever quite recovered from the astonishment they felt when they found her installed as the colleague of Schwellenberg, *vice* Haggerdorn, resigned.





THE TERROR OF THE PALACE



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE TERROR OF THE PALACE.

THE particular evening on which something approaching merriment prevailed in the tea-room, when the artless young gentleman with the title of Colonel was fooled to the top of his bent by the accomplished "Welbred," was recognised by all who were present as a sort of Colonels' Carnival: they knew that they were taking their farewell of gaiety, for their long penance was to begin the next day. "Were we not right to laugh while we were able?" wrote Fanny. "The next day—to dinner—arrived Mrs. Schwellenberg."

Apologists for this Elizabeth Juliana Schwellenberg have not been wanting during the past half century, but they have never succeeded in doing more for her than an ordinary master of cosmetics could do for a full-blooded negress. They have contrived to put a streak or two of greasy whitewash upon her, but no more. We have already mentioned that one of the Royal Dukes expressed the opinion on the appearance of the Diary that Fanny Burney had been too hard on her. He knew less about this than did his father. The King showed more than once that he had a pretty accurate knowledge of the



character of the woman who made life a burthen to every one—the Queen only excepted—with whom she came in contact. Her nature and her character were but too well known to all the Court. It has been urged on her behalf that she was a devoted servant of the Queen—that she was aged—that she suffered from wretched health, that her position was a trying one. These pleas all represent streaks of whitewash on a negress. A touch of a sponge removes them and we see her as she was—black throughout.

Fanny Burney had heard of her before entering the service of the Queen, but Mrs. Delany was not in a position to know much about her, and Mr. Smelt believed with all his heart that the honour of being permitted to hand the Queen her fan more than counterbalanced all that one could suffer at the hands of such a “coadjutrix” as this Mrs. Schwellenberg. It was only when she came in contact with the woman and found how she was regarded by the rest of the entourage, that she began to perceive what kind of person was this with whom she was expected to associate, not quite on equal terms, but as an apprentice with a foreman.

She began to suffer from the vile temper, the vulgarity, and the brutality of the woman within the first few weeks of her arrival at Windsor. One can see that she refrained at first from uttering so bitter a complaint as she might have done; but soon she found it impossible to restrain herself: we put it that she was too conscientious an artist to be able

to restrain herself; but then, artist-like, she refrained from comments: she felt that an ordinary record of the sayings and behaviour of Mrs. Schwellenberg was adequate for the relief of her feelings: that is to say, she was content to delineate her character from an impersonal point of view. She did not moan over her own sufferings through contact with the woman, but it would be impossible to read these pages of her Diary without becoming aware of how acute her sufferings were. Toward the end she became so inured to Mrs. Schwellenberg and her ways that—artist-like again—she was able to refer to her as she might to a part in a comedy—the part of the virago. It would be difficult for any intelligent person to study the Diary with any measure of care without perceiving that Fanny Burney, so far from being too hard on the Schwellenberg, exercised great self-restraint in her references to her, hardly ever making use of an expression qualifying her vanity, her captiousness, or her cruelty: when she refers to her as Cerbera, she feels that she has gone far enough. It is on account of the restraint that she shows in this direction that we feel our greatest admiration for Fanny Burney.

The situation was from the first an impossible one, and how it was maintained for so long would be a mystery, had we not plenty of evidence of the prudence, the patience, and the tact of Miss Burney. Mrs. Schwellenberg had come from Mecklenburg with Queen Charlotte—for how long before that date she had been attached to her person we are unable to

say; but we know that Mrs. Haggerdorn, whose place Fanny Burney took, was for twenty-six years in the Queen's service before her retirement. Here then are two typical German women, both grown old in the service of the Queen, and when one of them is compelled to retire through inability to discharge the duties which must have become as second nature to her, a much younger woman, who is as thoroughly English as the others are German, is engaged to take her place.

Now, quite apart from any consideration of the position in English society of the newcomer, or of her European fame as a writer, what chance, we would ask, had she of meeting with a favourable reception at the hands of an old woman whose reputation is not for erring on the side of courtesy toward strangers? We can easily picture the Queen's dressing-room, with Charlotte of Mecklenburg seated in her chair in the centre, and Haggerdorn of Mecklenburg with her ailments on one side, and Schwellenberg of Mecklenburg with her complaints on the other—fitting supporters for the central figure. Not a word of English is heard in the room. The conversation is bound to be on some trivial topic, for we are assured that each of the supporters of Royalty is as illiterate as the other; but there is plenty to discuss without travelling beyond the equerries' room or the governesses' room—there is gossip and there are comments upon the day's doings. Many a delightful half hour must have been spent by the three in this apartment.



And then suddenly an outsider is asked, not to make up a quartette, but to take the place of one of the trio! How was it possible that she should not be looked on as an intruder?

We cannot understand for what reason the Queen chose a person so unlike Mrs. Haggerdorn to take that lady's place, unless we consider the possibility of Her Majesty's having become wearied to death of seeing how rapidly the two women beside her were ageing—disagreeable reminders of the flight of time and the fate of princes as well as of tirewomen and toadies—and of her desire to have near her some one whose company would not be so depressing. But we have already given it as our opinion that the Queen did not really mean that Fanny should continue to be her Robe-keeper, merely giving her the appointment to enable her (the Queen) to find out for what position she was better suited.

But why should this Mrs. Schwellenberg, who was in such close contact with the Queen at all times that her influence was acknowledged to be very great, make no protest against the coming of a younger woman, possessing a disqualification so obvious as that of being an Englishwoman, and being, besides, wholly without experience of the duties of her post? It might surely be thought that a word from her in the Queen's ear would be sufficient to cause Her Majesty to abandon her project in regard to Miss Burney.

Certainly Mrs. Schwellenberg's acquiescence in this

matter seems at first sight to be rather strange. But we very quickly come to perceive what was in her mind to induce her to submit to the appointment. The truth is that she fancied she saw a chance of obtaining for herself a companion who, knowing nothing of Courts and Court ways, would submit to her rule more easily than an elder woman and a woman of experience might be expected to do. Mrs. Schwollenberg felt herself growing old, and with increasing infirmities she became aware of her need for the company of some one younger and perhaps more plastic than the Haggerdorn—some one who would devote all her time to looking after her and her comforts—some one, in short, who would act as a superior personal attendant upon herself.

Fanny Burney had no trouble in perceiving this before she had been many days at Windsor, and she resolved in her mind that the good woman should be informed of the mistake she made in fancying that the newcomer would submit to be dominated by such a person as Mrs. Schwollenberg. Her resolution was to this effect, but she never quite succeeded in carrying it out. It was, however, the constant succession of her attempts to make Mrs. Schwollenberg acquainted with her resolve that produced the friction between them. The more that Miss Burney tried to show her independence, the more Mrs. Schwollenberg tyrannised over her; and it certainly appears to us that the elder lady's success was more conspicuous than that of the younger. Fanny Burney submitted on all

material points in a way that she could never have thought it possible she should when she made her original resolution. She was imposed upon by the old woman almost daily, not quite so completely as the old woman would have liked, but still sufficiently to cause her life to be a burthen to her. For that matter, the old woman made the lives of all the other people with whom she came in contact a burthen to them as well, but this was only incidentally; it was open for any of them to avoid seeing her at any time; but Fanny Burney had no chance of an escape by flight, and she could only avoid her Cerbera by stratagems that caused great inconvenience to herself. She never succeeded in achieving the freedom which she had resolved to obtain for herself, and by way of a sop to Cerbera she gave her far more attention than she meant her to have.

In one place she mentions that Miss Planta had told her of hearing from Mr. Guiffardière how he had by chance seen her when *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Schwellenberg, and that the expression which he had observed upon her face gave him great concern. This accident was, Fanny states, vexatious, for she had always tried to make it appear that she got on well enough with Mrs. Schwellenberg; she tried to pass off the revelation as gaily as was possible, but he was not deceived. It was in a tone of the most compassionate regret that he exclaimed: "This, ma'am, is your colleague!—Who could ever have imagined it would have been Miss Burney's fate to be so coupled? Could you ever, ma'am, foresee



or suspect or believe that you should be linked to such a companion?"

It was made plain to her upon this occasion, as indeed it was upon many other occasions, that she had the hearty sympathy of every one who knew Mrs. Schwellenberg; but in order to make them think that she did not mind the woman's overbearing ways very much, she told them a number of droll stories of her treatment of some of her domestics, at which they were in fits of laughter, and so Mr. Guiffardière's compassion was divested of something of its gloom. But the fact of her being able to tell these stories helps us materially to understand the petty irritations to which she was subjected at the hands of Mrs. Schwellenberg.

In one of Croker's notes he mentions how it was stated that Mrs. Schwellenberg was so imperious that she was far better served than the Queen herself. Much in the Diary itself makes this statement quite plausible. That devotion to her Royal mistress which has more than once been placed to her credit by her whitewashers, assumes a somewhat different complexion when we learn that she did not even take the trouble to make the newcomer acquainted with her duties or with the etiquette of the Royal Establishment. She left it for Fanny to find out everything for herself. It is scarcely surprising that, in these circumstances, the latter was perpetually making mistakes. One of the least of these was her opening the door of the dining-room after coffee had been served upstairs—a thing

that should never have been done by her at that time. "These were things I had no one to tell me; I was left to find them out as I could," she complains. Again, it was from the Princess Royal that she had to learn that, on returning to Windsor after a Court day at St. James's, the Queen's jewel-box should be taken at once to her bedroom. Mrs. Schwollenberg had not so much as hinted to her that this was *de rigueur*, so that when Miss Burney was alone in attendance upon Her Majesty, she would have allowed the box to remain where it had been deposited had it not been for the thoughtfulness of the Princess.

Almost from the first her Cerbera set about snubbing her. Within the first few weeks after her coming to Windsor she called out in a commanding way in the Queen's dressing-room for Fanny to come to her when she had finished with Her Majesty. Fanny did not like the tone, but of course she could not resent it at the moment. When she found Mrs. Schwollenberg later, that person endeavoured to impress her with a sense of the favour that was being done to her and of the value of the Schwollenberg patronage, all this leading up to the announcement that she was to go to Oxford with the Queen and be given a gown for the occasion.

Now Fanny was not sufficiently accustomed to that form of patronage which would be accounted an impertinence were it shown by an ordinary person, but which, coming from a Queen, is an act of gracious condescension; and she records that she stared

and drew back with a look so undisguised of wonder and displeasure that even Mrs. Schwollenberg could not fail to comprehend its import. But the latter was not to be cowed.

"Miss Bernar," cried she quite angrily, "I tell you once when the Queen will give you a gown you must be humble thankful when you are Duchess of Ancaster" (Mistress of the Robes).

And yet in spite of this snub, Fanny Burney, although she hated cards, learned to play in order to humour the dragon.

But many another indignity had she to suffer at the hands of the same person. Mrs. Schwollenberg seemed to delight in belittling her who had been praised by the greatest people in England. When Fanny was going with the suite to Nuneham Courtney, Lord Harcourt's place, she remarked that she had been presented to his lordship by Sir Joshua Reynolds some years before, and that she had met him since. That mattered nothing, Mrs. Schwollenberg said; it should ever be Fanny's business to efface herself. "There is no need you might be seen. I shall do everything I can to assist you to appear for nobody," she cried; and this was her daily aim so long as she was near Fanny. She was perpetually sneering at her, especially when there were people present whom she wished to set right as to the relative standing of herself and her "Miss Bernar."

For instance, there appeared in the room one day a young clergyman named Griffith—he may have been a Welshman—who had heard that Mrs.



Schwollenberg's favour should be secured if he wanted preferment. But she was too conscientious to promise to say a word in his favour until she had judged of his capacity. She commanded him to read something for her, but at the suggestion of a novel she flared up. Never would such trash as a novel be read in her presence, she averred, and forthwith put a volume of Josephus into his hand. We should like to learn if, after this exercise of his powers through so unusual a medium for the display of elocution, the young man won the approval of his subtle critic of English pronunciation.

We know what the reputation of Mrs. Schwollenberg must have been when we hear how the good-natured people in the tea-room thought it advisable to make it up among themselves not to pay any attention to Miss Burney lest they should arouse the never very dormant jealousy of her Senior. She was, in fact, the terror of the whole Court.

Upon one occasion Miss Planta, the Princesses' teacher and companion, exclaimed :

"Oh, if she were not so cross, how happy we might all live!"

And again she begged Mr. Guiffardiére, who was going up to town from Windsor and might possibly see Mrs. Schwollenberg—she had been detained in town by illness—

"Now, for Heaven's sake, don't you begin talking to her of how comfortable we are here!—it will bring her back directly."

A more universally detested person than this colleague of Miss Burney could not be imagined.

But knowing that she had come with the Queen from Mecklenberg and that she had the Queen's ear, many members of the Royal entourage were ready to do their best to keep on friendly terms with her. She had for pets some toads—most fitting attachés to a Court since the days when the excuse for their existence as tests of loyalty was thought justifiable. Mr. de Luc, the geologist and one of the numerous staff of Readers, showed how anxious he was to get into her good graces by spending all his spare time catching flies for the toads : he would probably have eaten them if she had so desired it, in accordance with the traditions of the accommodating courtier.

Once this old gentleman thought fit to lecture Fanny for her not paying sufficient attention to Mrs. Schwellenberg. He thought that she should have spent more time with her. But this was too much for Fanny, and she immediately said that she had spent more time with her than she had ever meant to spend. He was extremely surprised at this, and ventured to hint that she should be more guarded and attend better to her own interest, which depended so largely upon the good-will of Mrs. Schwellenberg.

"I could not stand this," wrote Fanny ; "I assured him, with spirit and with truth, I had no interest in the matter. I had not sought the situation in which I had been placed : I owed nothing to Mrs. Schwellenberg but such civility as her civility might claim ; and far from trembling at her power, I considered myself wholly out of it. . . . I could by

no means consent to sacrifice the little leisure I might call my own to dedicate it where I could so little regard it as due."

She left the poor old narrow-minded gentleman amazed at her independence.

He was most assiduous in his attentions to Mrs. Schwellenberg and her pets, who belonged to the same order of beings as herself; but even Mr. de Luc could not avoid going against his patron upon one occasion. They were in her coach on the way to London. The day was a frosty one and Fanny's eyes were greatly inflamed through Mrs. Schwellenberg's insisting on the windows being kept open. When Mr. de Luc, greatly daring, closed one of them, she shrieked out:

"Put down that glass!"

Affecting not to hear the order, he went on conversing, and this so enraged her that she shouted out in the manner and the spirit of the vulgar virago for her order to be obeyed. When he tried to explain that it was on account of poor Miss Burney's inflamed eyes he had shut the window, she only became the louder and the more insistent. "Put it down," she cried; "without, I will get out; put it down when I tell you, it is my coach. I will have it. I might go alone in it or with one, or with what you call nobody, when I please!"

Doubtless she had defined the conditions of her travelling which would have been most pleasing to her unfortunate companions; but in the existing circumstances nothing remained for them but to submit



to her tyranny. The window was let down and Fanny did her best to keep off the bitter wind by holding her muff up to her face.

"What a journey ensued!" she wrote. "To see that face lighted up with fury is a sight for horror! I was glad to exclude it by my muff. . . . Not a word, not an apology, not one expression of being sorry at what I suffered, was uttered. The most horrible ill-humour, violence, and rudeness were all that were shown."

Another scene took place when a stop was made to water the horses and Mr. de Luc again pulled up the glass. "A voice of fury exclaimed, 'Let it down! Without, I won't go.'"

At a word from Fanny, not of remonstrance, but explanation, the monster yelled again:

"You might bear it when you like it! What did the poor Haggerdorn bear it! When the blood was all running down from her eyes."

Fanny learned that it was indeed through travelling in the coach with Mrs. Schwellenberg that "the poor Haggerdorn" became all but blind.

Why the Queen should have subjected any one to the inhuman tyranny of this hag remains a mystery. That she did so compels us to reduce by an adjective or two Fanny's constant references to "the sweet Queen," "the dear Queen," "the considerate Queen," and to feel that there may after all be some ground for the opinion of other writers who have suggested that Queen Charlotte was not always so sympathetic or considerate as Miss

Burney tried to make her father and sister (and perhaps herself as well) believe that she was.

It would be idle to pretend—as Fanny sometimes tried to do—that the qualities of Mrs. Schwollenberg were not perfectly well known to the Queen. If the Queen was not aware of them, she was the only one of the Royal Household who remained in ignorance in this respect. The King, at any rate, knew all about the beldam. It will be seen in due course that when he came upon Fanny upon one memorable occasion he started the subject of Mrs. Schwollenberg, and without waiting for her to say a word, begged her not to mind Mrs. Schwollenberg. “Never mind her! Don’t be oppressed! I am your friend! Don’t let her cast you down! I know you have had a hard time of it—but don’t mind her!” He went on to say much more in the same strain; but when the Queen asked her all that the King had said, she omitted his remarks upon this fruitful topic, “which would much, and very needlessly, have hurt her,” she wrote.

It seems rather a pity that she did not enlighten Her Majesty on a matter of so much interest to everybody. But really all that Fanny could have told her was what the Queen herself knew quite well: for how could the King have become acquainted with the character of the woman and the Queen remain in ignorance of it? And yet, even in her last year at Windsor, Fanny could write to her father that she could never explain to the Queen “that a situation which unavoidably casts all my leisure into the presence of Mrs. Schwollenberg must necessarily be

subversive of my health, because incompatible with my peace, my ease, my freedom, my spirits, and my affections"; for "the Queen is probably kept from any suspicion of the true nature of the case by the praises of Mrs. Schwellenberg, who, with all her asperity and persecution, is uncommonly partial to my society, because, in order to relieve myself from sullen gloom or apparent despondency, I generally make my best exertions to appear gay and chatty; for when I can do this she forbears both rudeness and imperiousness. . . . I would not turn informer for the world. Mrs. Schwellenberg, too, with all her faults, is heart and soul devoted to her Royal mistress."

The most illuminating glimpse that we get of the woman is, however, in a single paragraph in that part of the Diary that refers to the dreadful malady which came upon the King. When the misery of every one was most intense, the bulletin being to the effect that His Majesty had passed his worst night—when the raving of the madman could be heard by every one who went near the wing of the Lodge at Kew to which he had been conveyed, back from London came Mrs. Schwellenberg, "so oppressed between her spasms and the house's horrors, that the oppression she inflicted ought perhaps to be pardoned," Miss Burney charitably suggested. "It was, however, difficult enough to bear!" she adds. "Harshness, tyranny, dissension, and even insult, seemed personified. I cut short details upon this subject—they would but make you sick."





Queen Charlotte.

Engraving from the original by Sir William Beechey, Bart.



We cannot do better than follow her example in regard to this odious wretch, who was so lost to all the decencies and amenities of life that even the terrible blow that had fallen upon the Royal Household did not grant those connected with it an amnesty from her violence and brutality.

But she was undoubtedly heart and soul devoted to her Royal mistress.





THE ADVENTURES OF A NEOPHYTE





## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ADVENTURES OF A NEOPHYTE

THE nature of her position and of her environment in the ordinary circumstances of her life at Windsor and Kew has perhaps been referred to at sufficient length to enable a reader to understand how appalling the monotony must have been to the author of *Evelina*, who had since her childhood been accustomed to such freedom and variety of intercourse with people of culture.

One point it is necessary for a reader to bear in mind in this connection, and that is, all the time she was submitting to what she called her "fate," with scarcely a murmur against its hardships, she was quite unaware of that upon which we are to-day fully informed—namely, the importance to her of the pecuniary reward which she was to receive for her heroism. Reviewing the whole circumstances of her connection with the Court, of her sufferings in the service of the Queen, and of her life afterward, and knowing how extremely important a part the pension which she received played in her after life, and the sum that it amounted to in the aggregate, every reasonable person capable of pronouncing a sane

opinion on a purely business matter must, we think, come to the conclusion that Miss Burney did very well for herself, and for Madame d'Arblay in particular, by her connection with the Queen. But let it not be forgotten that Fanny Burney knew nothing of this. She had no idea that after five years' service she would be granted an allowance that should make all the difference to her between penury and comfort—between dependence upon contributions from her own family for her support, and independence, which, in her case, meant marriage with a man she loved and the happiness of motherhood. She could not foresee all that would come about through her having that fixed income for her life; and this being so, our admiration for the spirit she displayed in putting up with the many indignities of the servitude—in putting up with the many idiotic etiquettes, the foolish forms that surround a monarch—in putting up with the dullness of the equerries, the senile advice of counsellors whom she knew to be infinitely inferior to her in intelligence, and the tyranny of a woman whose qualities made her more fit to discharge the duties of an establishment that is proscribed by law rather than those of intimate association with a sovereign—must surely be immeasurably increased. People will work patiently in an uncongenial situation, if they have in view an end that they know to be greatly to their advantage; but Fanny Burney had not her eyes fixed upon so encouraging a prospect. What had she to look forward to? Well, she had seen Mrs. Haggerdorn

retiring, diseased and almost blind, from Royal service, and she saw the other hag, Mrs. Schwel-  
lenberg, spasmodic, spending all her time between  
attendance on her physician in London and plaguing  
every one at Court, loathed by all and a burthen  
to herself at the age of sixty!

These were the examples of the fruits of the  
diligent performance of the service upon which she  
had entered; and what a prospect must the sight  
of them have suggested to a woman of the vivid  
imagination of Fanny Burney! We have seen the  
picture which came from the imagination of a French  
artist—the picture of the first day of a young neophyte  
at the service in the monastery which he has entered.  
On every side of him are the figures of the men who  
have grown aged in the service of the Church. One  
has the shrunken smile of the hopeless imbecile,  
another the cunning leer of the half-demented, on the  
face of a third is the expression of the *Melancholia* of  
Albrecht Dürer, and on that of the fourth the horrible  
blank of a mind decrepid. All show uneven fangs or  
toothless gums as they sit with their mouths parted  
in singing the praises of God.

Thinking of the picture of that youthful neophyte  
and his stimulating surroundings, we get a suggestion,  
we think, of the picture that the imagination of Fanny  
Burney was able to paint of the result of her service  
upon the Queen. These were her examples—the  
two hags, Haggerdorn and Hecate—to this favour  
she must come!

The first insight that she had into the difference



there was between her old life and her new came to her upon the occasion of the great treat which Mrs. Schwellenberg had promised to do her best to obtain for her—a treat carrying with it the gift of a new gown to save her from feeling the humiliation of poverty, so thoughtfully expressed by her senior colleague. She was informed that the King and Queen were going to visit Oxford, and that she was to be of the party. She gives a very full account of this excursion, and in reading it we quickly become aware of the gradual awaking to the truth of what her adviser had said about her utter unimportance upon such occasions: “There is no need you might be seen. I shall do everything I can to assist you to appear for nobody.”

But there was one person at Windsor who knew that even if Miss Burney did not quite succeed in effacing herself, what she would have to go through during the visit would probably efface her from the earth unless she took care of herself. It was the young Princess Elizabeth, who, after the King and Queen had departed early in the morning, begged her in a whisper to lie down until it was time for her to start with the rest of the suite. Their Majesties were to breakfast at Lord Harcourt’s, but the others were not to leave Windsor until they had eaten an early dinner. They managed to do so and to set out at three o’clock, and reached Nuneham about six. And then began the first experience that the author of *Evelina* had had for several years of being a nonentity; and although

her artistic sense enabled her to see the comedy of the situation—at some moments it threatened to become a farce—it is still certain she felt the humiliation that it brought to her more than she could discreetly express.

When the coach arrived at the door of the mansion, which she describes as half-new, half-old, half-comfortable and half-forlorn, straggling, but pleasantly situated, she and her companions, Miss Planta and a German dresser for the Princesses, neither porter nor footman was to be seen. The postilions had to dismount in order to assist the ladies. And Miss Burney had actually fancied that the lady of the house would have given instructions for her to be received by some responsible member of the family! Miss Planta, the governess, knew better. She would not allow Fanny to walk about until some one chanced to turn up; but proposed that they should enter the house and find some one to show them to their rooms.

This was excellent advice, but it was not so easy to follow it. They went inside, and after wandering through many passages came upon "a prodigious fine servant," and ventured to ask this luminary to be directed to Lady Harcourt's maid. The only answer they obtained was a bow as he walked on. Two more servants, evidently proud of their liveries, treated them with the same cold hauteur, and poor Miss Burney, accustomed to be regarded everywhere as an honoured visitor, was overwhelmed with shame. She felt it extremely irksome to wander about the

house as an uninvited guest—"a visitor, unthought of; without even a room to go to, a person to inquire for, or even a person to speak to." She thought, very justly, that the lady of the house was to blame for this negligence; and when, later, the lady of the house appeared, and, on being informed of the misadventure, apologised for her neglect, Miss Burney treated her to the coldest of curtsies in acknowledgment.

After a quarter of an hour of fruitless exploration of corridors, a lady's-maid was encountered, and after leading them to a parlour overlooking the park, in which she said the King and Queen were walking with their host and hostess, left the room to order tea. As she seemed to be in no haste to return, and fearing that the Royal party might choose to enter the house through the garden door of this room, Miss Burney and her companion set off for a third series of explorations, but met with no greater success than had resulted from their previous attempts in the other passages, though they came in contact with several of the gold-laced superciliosities who had too fine a sense of their own dignity to give them any information. The whole affair must have suggested the arrival of two strangers at a home of mystery, as described in one of the lurid novels which were coming into fashion, though to Fanny it was altogether shocking.

It was not until a considerable time had passed that they saw in the distance the Princesses' dresser, and by her were led to the Princesses' rooms. While



superintending some arrangements here, and hastening from passage to passage, Lady Harcourt appeared on a landing, and being acquainted with Miss Planta, asked to be introduced to Miss Burney.

It was then that Fanny retrieved her self-respect by the cold curtsey to which we have alluded.

Miss Planta, accustomed to play the rôle of a nonentity, laughed most heartily when Lady Harcourt had turned her back ; but Miss Burney could perceive no laughing matter, unless there was something comical about her own dismay to the eyes of her friend.

In the Princesses' room tea was served, and, of course, a moment later the Princess Royal and her sister Elizabeth rushed into the room, and endeavoured to place Miss Burney at her ease, only succeeding, however, in increasing her confusion. The pleasant young ladies taking their departure after a time, the old longing came upon her to discover her own room.

After some trouble a woman-servant was seized upon and asked to conduct her thither, but in descending some stairs leading to the state apartments the Princess Royal suddenly appeared before her with Lady Ancaster, the Mistress of the Robes, by her side ; and it was clear that the Duchess had heard the story of the *contretemps* up to that point ; but the end had by no means been reached, for, on Lady Ancaster's advising her to take possession of the eating-room, which the ladies were to have in

common with the equerries, the search party were stopped by the arrival of the King, his host walking backward with candles, as etiquette demanded, and His Majesty spoke to Miss Burney, inquiring about her journey. When the procession had moved on and the eating-room was found, Fanny and her friend entered, expecting to find their hostess's sisters, the Miss Vernons, awaiting them—Lady Harcourt had promised their attendance to do the second-class honours of the establishment—but the room was empty. While they were wondering what would come next, the door opened and it came—the incident taking the form of a handsome young clergyman, who bowed civilly, the ladies sinking in curtsies. Afterward came the equerries, and then a housemaid, whom Fanny appropriated in order to be shown to her room, the fact being that the non-arrival of any of the ladies of the house struck her as being so uncivil that all she wished was to retire as speedily as possible from the party. Finding herself at last within the room, she talked over Miss Planta to her plan of not returning to the company until sent for; and so for two hours they remained alone and apart from the household. Then a housemaid knocked at the door with the announcement that supper was ready, and fled before they could get an answer from her to their question, "Who sent you?" The servants in this establishment seemed to be the servants of a farce; and Miss Planta's treatment of the next one that knocked at the door—this time it was a gold-laced footman—appertained to the

visitor in a farce. With a sort of "No, you don't" manner of the farcical soubrette, she darted after him ; but he was too quick for her ; her "Who sent you?" missed him, but some one else down the corridor shouted the inquiry after him, and he was heard to reply, "The equerries want the ladies!"

This was enough. Miss Planta called back, "We don't choose any supper," and returned to the room overflowing with indignation. It did not matter to the yellow-laced footman—he would be styled "flunkey" in the farce—it was a matter of indifference to him whether the ladies got supper or went hungry to bed. And then a council of war took place between the sulky ladies. Miss Planta thought the equerries insolent, but Miss Burney knew they were not to blame : it was the want of common civility on the part of the ladies of the house that she held responsible for all.

Of course the last act—the usual conciliation and explanation—was played before the curtain was rung down—part of it before Miss Burney had "drawn her midnight curtain close"; for Lady Harcourt came to her room with a pleasant message, and in the morning Miss Planta had an interview with the equerries and learned from them that the message which had been sent from them was that the Miss Vernons—Lady Harcourt's sisters—begged the company of Miss Burney and Miss Planta to supper. The whole story had been told to the Queen, and she gave her approval to the dignity assumed by the ladies, and before the next morning had advanced very far it was



over the house, and every one was laughing over the gold-laced "gag"—"The equerries want the ladies!"

Many comedies have been written on a far narrower basis than this which was played among the passages of Nuneham Courtney in 1786.

**A DAY OF WAITING**





## CHAPTER XVIII

### A DAY OF WAITING

THE firm standing up for the dignity of her position by Miss Burney, just recorded, shows that she should not always be regarded as the shy little mouse of St. Martin's Street. She showed that she was quite capable of asserting herself when occasion made it necessary for her to do so. But her later references to the Miss Vernons proved also that she was incapable of doing injustice to any one in her Diary: for although these dim ladies had been, to say the least, strangely negligent of the *convenances* of their position as deputies of Lady Harcourt, Fanny is ready with excuses for them, even when they had shown themselves still more indifferent to the call of politeness by hurrying off to church, leaving her and Miss Planta to find their way thither as best they might.

"When the service was over and the Royal Family were gone, I thought it but right in such a place," she says, "to subdue my proud feelings so far as to say to the Miss Vernons I hoped we had not disturbed them."

Then Miss Vernon coloured and apologised for

hurrying on to church, and endeavoured to make amends for the past by doing the honours of the altar-piece, painted by Mason, the poet, and representing "The Good Samaritan," we are told by Mr. Austin Dobson, whose editorial notes to the six-volume edition of the *Diary* are the delight of all students of the century.

It would be interesting to know if Miss Burney dilated to the Miss Vernons upon the possibility of a modern application being made of the lessons of the parable illustrated by Mr. Mason.

But before attending the religious service in the chapel, Miss Burney was privileged to take part in another, only second in importance in her estimation : she had to take part in the Royal toilette at eight o'clock, Her Majesty having considerately told her that she would not want her earlier, knowing as she did that there would be some difficulty over the hairdressing.

There was considerable difficulty over this crowning office of the toilette. The architect of the imposing structure that surmounted the head of the Lady of Quality during the last quarter of the eighteenth century was possibly the most important official of the *levée*. In the Royal Household, his duties were naturally arduous, especially when Her Majesty had reached those years when her locks were showing signs of "thinning" and required to be dealt with tenderly and economically. And if the Queen demanded the attention of such an artist, his ministrations were equally needed by her attendants.

We get a hint of the exigencies of the fashion of the hour in many parts of the Diary, but in none more distinctly than those referring to the visit to Nuneham. Oxford was the "objective" of the next day's excursion, and Fanny has pride in recording the joy she felt on being able to tell the Queen, on Her Majesty's making the inquiry, that she had brought with her "a new Chamberry gauze," having ignored the command of Mrs. Schwellenberg only to carry with her one dress. But the beauty of the fabric which she specified would not compensate for negligence in another direction; so, long after midnight, Miss Burney had to make arrangements to send into Oxford to obtain the services of a hairdresser on her behalf at six o'clock in the morning. As the Queen did not want her until eight, she thought that she could just manage to have her hair made tidy within the two hours.

She had formed too optimistic an estimate of the work. The artist began punctually at six, and yet he had not finished when the Queen's own hairdresser came to announce that Her Majesty was waiting for her attendance. She just managed to get to the Royal dressing-room, but she had a narrow escape of being too late, even though she had not waited to put on her cap. The gracious Queen, hearing of her difficulty, promised her in any future emergency the services of the assistant to her own hairdresser, "as soon as he had done with the Princesses"!

Now, if each of the Princesses required two hours for her hairdressing, and Miss Burney could not do



with less, it is plain that the coiffeur would find it necessary to begin work about one o'clock in the morning, for of course it could not be expected that the Queen would wait until eight o'clock every day ! Rarely during the century that has elapsed since those days has the feminine fashion in hair been so exacting. If the young Princesses were compelled to get up shortly after midnight to have their hair dressed for the morning, they were more fortunate than Lady Austen, of Olney, who was compelled to sit up every Saturday night for fear of disarranging the structure of her hair, which her coiffeur had to create before midnight, as he refused, from conscientious scruples, to work on the Sabbath day. The gentle religious atmosphere of Olney, if eminently favourable to the enrichment of the hymnal, clearly had its drawbacks.

But the demands of the toilette complied with, the Royal party set out for Oxford, and Miss Burney had another opportunity of learning that the honour of being part of the Royal train demanded more than a little self-sacrifice. It was not that the service was laborious, but that it was constant—in that fact may be found the disagreeable impression it produced upon Fanny Burney. It must have seemed to her, as it seems to us, a frightful waste of time. During the visit to Oxford she had little to do except to keep on her feet ; but when she had discharged this duty for several consecutive hours and had not been allowed the meal-hours of the ordinary domestic, she could not be blamed if now and again she had an unworthy feel-

ing that the honour of her place barely compensated for the hardship that was associated with it.

The party consisted of the King and Queen, three Princesses, the Duchess of Ancaster (Mistress of the Robes), Lord and Lady Harcourt, Lady Charlotte Bertie, and the two Miss Vernons. The equerries were General Harcourt, Colonel Digby, and Major Price; the chaplain was the handsome young Mr. Hugget, and the ladies in attendance were Miss Burney and Miss Planta.

Finding herself in the midst of the buildings that suggested so much to her by "their grandeur, nobility, antiquity, and elevation," Fanny, who was possibly the only one of the train with any imagination, confesses to a lapse. "I felt, for the first time since my new situation had taken place, a rushing in of ideas that had no connection with it whatever." This was humiliating. It would have horrified Mrs. Schwellenberg to hear that Miss "Bernar" had so far forgotten her duty as to allow herself to be touched by some emotions that did not emanate from a sense of the privileges she enjoyed in being permitted nightly to enwrap the Queen in her *peignoir*.

She describes, with an ample appreciation of its picturesque as well as its comedy elements, the ceremony of presenting an address to the King by the Vice-Chancellor in the theatre; but she confesses that she would have taken more interest in all that was going on if she could have made up her mind whether she should regard herself as a mere casual onlooker or as a member of the Royal

suite. She must constantly have been wondering, as we do to-day, what business she had at Oxford upon this occasion. The Queen was not likely to call upon her to put her to bed, nor did Her Majesty contemplate a sudden change of toilette. But she was in the Queen's service, and she may have recalled very vividly, before the day was over, Milton's line :—

“They also serve who only stand and wait.”

The day was one of such standing and waiting as she had never before experienced.

“Poor Miss Burney!” cried the Mistress of the Robes to the Junior Keeper of the Robes. “Poor Miss Burney! I wish she could sit down, for she is unused to this work. She does not know yet what it is to stand for five hours following, as we do.”

Poor Miss Burney knew before the day was over.

The truth was that the learned heads of the University had not expected to have to provide luncheon for any but the members of the Royal Family. They had apparently not anticipated the arrival of several carriages laden with people of the Royal Household, every one of whom would have had as much satisfaction as their Majesties could possibly have in allaying the pangs of hunger and thirst; and the result was a day of feasting for the Royalties and of famishing for their attendants.

The address presented to the King was, of course, of the usual type; only it contained a congratulatory



reference to the escape which His Majesty had had from the knife of the madwoman. Every one in the building, seeing the Queen and Princesses deeply affected, was also affected, or affected to be affected, until no dry eye remained. The King read his reply with "ease, feeling, force, and without any hesitation." After some playing on the organ (Handel, we trust), the Vice-Chancellor and the Professors begged to have the honour of kissing the King's hand; and though His Majesty saw that it would be impossible, considering the infirmities of some of the learned gentlemen, at once to satisfy their laudable ambition and the exigencies of etiquette involved in the act, without considerable personal risk, for there were rather steep stairs leading to the platform, and every stair had to be trodden *backward*, he gave his consent. The problem of how to manage the hand-kissing without loss of life or injury to limb was solved by the King's descending the stairs and receiving the dignitaries without risk to their dignity on the floor of the hall. But the gracious thoughtfulness of the monarch was lost upon some of them, for the moment they had kissed the Royal hand they turned right about and strolled off contentedly; others, in striving after formality, tripped over their robes and trod on the toes of their brethren behind them; the rest, either through being unaccustomed to kneel or having a too intimate acquaintance with the lines of Ovid—

"Os homini sublime dedit, cælumque tueri  
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera, tollere vultus"—

boldly lifted the King's hand to their lips; but even these were more polite than some of their weaker brethren, who, when they had got down upon their knees, found it impossible to rise again except by a long pull and a strong pull upon the King's hand.

Miss Burney's eye for comedy took in all that was to be seen, and her pen described the scene with great animation. Nor did this spirit desert her when she had to refer to the subsequent incidents of the day. After visiting the colleges a cold collation was spread upon the table at Christ Church for the Royalties. "I could not see of what it consisted," wrote Miss Burney, "though it would have been very agreeable, after so much standing and sauntering, to have given my opinion of it in an experimental way."

At once their Majesties and the Princesses sat down to the table, and the privilege of watching them eat and drink was graciously extended to their loyal subjects at the bottom of the hall.

But if the appetite grows with eating, assuredly it does not diminish through watching others eat; and soon the whisper went round the semicircle of earnest watchers that the ladies of the suite were famishing. They had had nothing to eat since early in the morning, and now the hour was long past three. The authorities whispered that they could have anything in reason that they chose to ask for, and they, womanlike, suggested tea, coffee, or chocolate. By the ingenuity of the equerries, and their professional

skill in improvising a defence, the difficulties incidental to satisfying appetites and etiquette at the same time were overcome by the order being given for a body of the onlookers to act as a screen while the ladies, one at a time, attacked the viands on a table far down the hall. In this manner they were all eventually "very plentifully and very pleasantly served," Miss Burney records. And the employment of the same tactics enabled the Duchess of Ancaster and Lady Charlotte Bertie—the latter had sprained her ankle—to take a well-earned rest.

And now the rumour seemed to have spread in certain directions that one of the ladies in the Queen's suite was actually the daughter of a Doctor of Music of the University, and this caused several of the professors to address her by name—some of them might even have heard of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*; and when she was lingering in one of the chapels, a dignitary, with that facetiousness which goes with the professional gown in the stress of circumstances beyond human control remarked that she seemed inclined to abide with them; upon which a rival humorist, of the same order, not to be outdone, cried, "No, no; don't let us shut up Miss Burney among old tombs!—No, no!"

All this was delightful to Miss Burney and prevented her from feeling either hungry or tired any more; so that when, later in the day, after other colleges had been visited and the Mayor of Oxford knighted, an equerry produced from his pocket a paper of apricots and bread—a singular combination for a meal



—she could decline them, as well as an invitation to rest in a room not likely to be visited by Royalty. He insisted, however, on her taking an apricot.

But the repast was not more than begun by the equerry and his friends when the door suddenly opened and the Queen entered with as many attendants as the room would contain.

“Quick into our pockets was crammed our bread and close into our hands was squeezed our fruit,” she wrote, “by which I discovered that our appetites were supposed to be annihilated, at the same time that our strength was to be invincible.”

In an equally light-hearted way she refers to some of the breaches of etiquette that took place when the King entered some room where he was not expected by any one, and of the heroic attempts made by men and women to keep themselves from forfeiting their self-respect for ever by falling short in any way of the requirements of the situation. But withal good people were evermore tripping over their gowns in their well-meant attempts to walk in a way that Nature never intended they should walk, and others were breathlessly sliding along the wainscot toward the doors, suggesting nothing so much, apparently, as children playing blind man’s buff.

Never for a moment did Miss Burney lose her interest in what was going on; and this was her saving while in the service of the Queen.

She left Nuneham on excellent terms with every one—and, we are inclined to think, with herself as well; for she had by her firmness and tact vindicated

her claim to be looked upon, not as a woman content to lose her identity within a vague reference to "the suite," but as a personality owing nothing to the incident of her moving as a part of a procession with Royalty at the head. She had gone directly against the advice—its insistence gave it the air of a command—of her colleague in every particular: she had been told that she must be content to annihilate herself upon every occasion when breathing the same atmosphere as the Queen, and her monitress had very kindly promised to assist her to this end by all the means in her power. But Fanny had ignored her command, and the result was that she left Nuneham as Miss Burney, not merely as a nameless one of "the suite." If one of the yellow-laced gentlemen who had ignored her arrival at the house had been equally insolent on her departure, he would have celebrated his own departure the next hour. So much we may conclude from the buoyant air of her entries in the Diary describing the attention paid to her by Lord Harcourt and the Miss Vernons during the last day of her stay at Nuneham. If she had not been in a particularly good humour with every one—including herself—she would not have felt inclined to give us so sprightly an account of the sudden appearance at the breakfast-table of the wife of General Harcourt, a lady with the arch manner of the faded belle of the century—all powder and pout, simper and smile—rallying her husband, but getting no response except in his grave looks and the expressive silence of every one at the table—a finished little sketch ready to be developed

into a complete picture by any novelist who has need for a suggestion taken from life.

On the whole, then, we are inclined to believe that the Queen was greatly pleased with her new Robe-keeper; and we are sure that Miss Planta, who, we suspect, had long ago adopted the easy-going scheme of self-effacement, conceived a respect for Miss Burney, since she had shown that her attitude was one of self-respect and reasonable dignity. At any rate, Miss Planta and she formed a friendship—with something of the nature of a defensive alliance in it—that grew stronger in the face of the tyranny to which they were subjected in Mrs. Schwellenberg's room.



**LEARNING HER BUSINESS**



## CHAPTER XIX

### LEARNING HER BUSINESS

THE excursion to Oxford took place in August, 1786 — Fanny Burney had entered on her duties in July—and it remained for a long time the most important incident that she had to record. She had, however, several interesting hours, making the acquaintance of quite a variety of people, all worthy of the notice of one who delighted to observe—sometimes with the eye of the microscopist preparing a new “slide”—men and women and their ways. She met Herschel several times, and his sister, who had proved that the discovery of comets was not outside a woman’s “sphere,” and as an industry it has had more than one female follower since. Dr. Herschel came to the Lodge “to exhibit the new comet,” Fanny Burney quaintly writes, as though it were a strange animal brought by her friend Bruce from Abyssinia, or a curious fruit brought by her sailor brother from the South Seas. The next entry has a feminine touch about it: the comet had turned into a baby; it was “very small and had nothing grand or striking in its appearance,” she wrote, “but it is a first lady’s comet,” she added apologetically—as if to suggest that too much should not be expected from a



beginner. But then Herschel showed her "some of his new discovered universes," and these were, of course, admirably finished productions, being the work of a man.

Strange to say, she does not in this connection remind her sister that their mother had once written a treatise on comets. The interest that she took in astronomy—those were the days immediately antecedent to the appearance of "Astronomy and the Use of the Globes" in the curriculum of the "Seminary for Young Ladies"—shows that she had not lived in vain in the house that Sir Isaac Newton had once inhabited. Dr. Burney had the greatest admiration for the great investigator, being something of an astronomer himself.

Miss Harriet Bowdler, whose name, owing to her brother's amiable achievement in the production of a properly expurgated edition of Shakespeare, gave a word to the English language that Shakespeare would have delighted in, was also among the new acquaintances. Miss Bowdler had written a volume of sermons which went into fifty editions! *Evelina* had only reached a fifth at this time. But we now require the services of an erudite editor like Mr. Austin Dobson to tell us who Miss Bowdler was, while the name of Fanny Burney holds its place in the catalogue of every library.

Shortly afterward she found herself, owing to the absence of her Senior in the hands of her doctor in London, the head of the ante-room—the *Présidente* of the table at which the Queen's own guests were

bidden to dine, and of whose hospitality more than one bishop had partaken. Fanny must have felt elated—certainly her friends the equerries were overjoyed. But, alas! her pride quickly had a fall! The Queen had one morning told her to invite to her table a certain German clergyman named Mithoff, and as the invitation was for the next day, she sent her servant to him immediately, presenting her compliments and asking for the pleasure of his company. The Queen had said to her, "I assure you he is a very worthy man, of very excellent character, or I would not ask you to invite him." So high a recommendation coming from such a quarter could not but have gone far in allaying any suspicions that Fanny might have been disposed to harbour respecting the gentleman, and she thought it a pity that so admirable a person should be kept all to herself, so she wrote to Miss Port, Mrs. Delany's niece, to keep her company upon this occasion.

Unfortunately Miss Port did not appear at the hour named for the dinner; but some one else did: Mrs. Schwollenberg walked into the room and took her accustomed place as *Présidente*, insisting that the dinner should be served without a moment's delay. In a short time Miss Port arrived, and immediately afterward the German clergyman, who was very badly received by Mrs. Schwollenberg. He, however, marched up to Miss Burney and, after thanking her for the invitation, assured her that he had never been so flattered before.

The dinner went on without Mrs. Schwellenberg's sullenness departing ; and when an adjournment was made to the room upstairs for coffee, the stranger renewed his thanks ; and when he learned that he had been invited by order of the Queen he was the more delighted.

It was like her monitress to draw her aside at that moment with the inquiry :

" For what have you brought me this man ? "

Fanny could not reply lest the gentleman might hear her ; but turning to him, tried to make conversation by asking if he intended remaining for long at Windsor ; at which he looked surprised and assured her that he had no thought of leaving. She began to suspect that some curious mistake had been made, and so, later, she addressed him as Mr. Mithoff. He stared at her and said that his name was not Mr. Mithoff !

It was clear that a mistake had been made, but she did her best to relieve the man's embarrassment ; he was, however, modest, she said, and soon after took his leave. Of course the servant who had been charged with the delivery of this invitation to Mr. Mithoff was brought up and interrogated ; and he calmly said he had forgotten the gentleman's name, but as she had said that he was a German clergyman, he had given the message to the first German clergyman whom he had met. It was plainly his belief that one would do as well as another for dining purposes.

We do not hear what the Queen said when she was made aware of this most awkward *contretemps* ; and



Fanny evidently thought it unnecessary to record what Mrs. Schwellenberg said, and she was certainly right. The omission can easily be made good by any one who has become informed as to the ability of that lady to make her feelings intelligible even in moments of excitement.

This manservant, called John, who had been allotted to Miss Burney, was beyond doubt not merely a fool, but a very insolent fool. He was constantly making mistakes, and taking on himself to put his own interpretation upon the obvious. He was a John Wilson Croker sort of lackey in this respect.

Before two months had passed he had placed Miss Burney in another extremely awkward position. He had apparently got an appointment of his own to keep one evening, and so went to the room in which the equerries were dining, rapping at the door and saying, "My lady is waiting tea." The gentlemen hurried through their dinner in response to this summons, which they supposed came from her: but it so happened that this was an evening on which Fanny Burney had been sent on a commission to Mrs. Delany; so that she had time only to look into the tea-room before she left. The equerries were there, and she hastily mentioned to them that she was going out, without making any attempt to apologise for so doing. She only said that she would probably return in a quarter of an hour and give them tea; but if they were hurried, her servant would bring it in at once.

Colonel Goldsworthy looked surprised and dis-

pleased, and his brother equerries no less so; and when she returned she could not but notice that these expressions were intensified. She was quite bewildered when, after pouring out the tea, Goldsworthy made a speech to her, slightly sarcastic, saying that he feared that he and his companions were intruding upon her, but assuring her that they would not have done so had they not received her urgent summons. This was not enlightening to her, and she demanded to be informed what summons had ever come from her to the equerries. Then the truth respecting the servant's presumption was revealed, and the *status quo ante* in the tea-room was restored.

Fanny must have been all the more annoyed at the man's insolence by reason of its affecting Colonel Goldsworthy, the equerry in waiting, who was certainly on the friendliest terms with her, and who had caused her many a laugh by his humorous ways and his dry deliverances, many of them touched with a cynicism he could never have felt. It was he who defined the life of an attendant upon Royalty. "Well! it's honour! that's one comfort; it's all honour! Royal honour!—one has the honour to stand till one has not a foot left, and to ride till one's stiff, and to walk till one's ready to drop—and then one makes one's lowest bow, d'ye see, and blesses one's self with joy for the honour!"

He it was who, in the same strain, predicted — and truly enough—what her sufferings would be during the winter.

"Wait till November and December," he growled.

“Running along in these cold passages ; then bursting into rooms fit to bake you ; then back again into all these agreeable puffs ! Bless us ! I believe in my heart there’s wind enough in these passages to carry a man-of-war ! And there you’ll have your share, ma’am, I promise you that ! You’ll get knocked up in three days, take my word for that.”

Nothing could be more amusing in its way than the same gentleman’s account of the falling off in the early devotions of the Royal Household with the increasing rigour of the winter. First the Queen ceased to attend the chapel, he said ; “the Princess Elizabeth is done for ; then Princess Royal begins coughing ; then Princess Augusta gets the snuffles, and all the poor attendants drop off, one after another, like so many snuffs of candles ; till at last dwindle, dwindle, dwindle—not a soul goes to chapel but the King, the parson, and myself ; and there we three freeze it out together.”

In fact, this Colonel Goldsworthy is one of the most enlivening characters sketched by Miss Burney in this part of her Diary. He is another of those persons who might be transferred bodily to the pages of a fiction, for when we read his many whimsical sayings, we feel as if he had been transferred from the pages of a fiction to those of the Diary. In a comedy his appearance and “dialogue” would be sufficient to give interest to any scene. What, for instance, could be more comical than his account of his attendance upon the King when hunting?—



"Fagging away like mad from eight in the morning to five or six in the afternoon, home we came, looking like so many drowned rats, with not a dry thread about us, nor a morsel within us—sore to the very bone, and forced to smile all the time!—and then, after all this, what do you think follows?—'Here, Goldsworthy,' cries His Majesty, so up I comes to him, bowing profoundly and my hair dripping down to my shoes. 'Goldsworthy,' cries His Majesty. 'Sir,' says I, smiling agreeably, with the rheumatism just creeping all over me! but still expecting something a little comfortable, I wait patiently to know his gracious pleasure; and then, 'Here, Goldsworthy, I say,' he cries, 'will you have a little barley-water?' Barley-water in such a plight as that! Fine compensation for a wet jacket, truly!—barley-water! I never heard such a thing in my life! barley-water after a whole day's hard hunting!"

The marvel is that Fanny Burney had not suggested to her the ground-work of a novel, giving her an opportunity of making use of some of these whimsical characters with whom she came in contact. When she can contrive to make every one of them live and breathe the breath of life in the pages of her Diary, how could she have had any difficulty in accommodating them to the requirements of a novel or in accommodating a novel to their requirements? But, as it was, the only novel which she wrote after meeting these men and taking notes of their possibilities for such a work, was one that does not seem to us to contain a single character of any vitality comparable

with the simplest of her character-sketches in the Diary.

The only explanation that occurs to us of what must seem to a good many readers an almost inexplicable neglect of an obvious chance of making use of good material, is one that persons of delicacy of feeling but devoid of the instincts of a novelist may appreciate—namely, good taste. Once more Fanny Burney's keen sense of what would fall short of good taste compelled her to lose her chance, and we are deprived of a novel or a comedy of the century which might have surpassed in liveliness the most living pages of *Evelina* and in delicate colouring the most natural chapter of *Cecilia*. She was, however, always afflicted with that form of artificiality known as good taste—that element which has interfered from time to time with the consummation of artistic endeavour—and even her five years of servitude did not relieve her of its promptings. In the case of her Diary she took good care that the onus of the charge of bad taste should be borne by the individuals who made themselves, by the use of it, the basis of the most interesting passages that it contains: she took care that the blame should be laid on their shoulders, not on hers. But even in her assuming the rôle of the simple blameless recorder who declined to associate herself with the doubtful sentiments of some—all too few—of her friends, she conveys to us now and again her suspicion that some one might think she was going too far. She had no idea of

the mutability of the canons of this virtue which she cultivated so industriously—that some words which she used and which were in everyday use in her century would be thought shocking a hundred years later, and that much she would have died sooner than discuss should become, under the disguise of scientific names, the most ordinary topics of society in its serious moods.

We feel that she is not quite sure that she was not passing the limits of decorum when she sets about telling one of the most charming stories in the whole of her Diary—that relating to an exchange of caresses between the King and Queen. Only in her own words can the scene be described.

“The Queen had nobody but myself with her one morning, when the King hastily entered the room with some letters in his hand, and addressing her in German, which he spoke very fast and with much apparent interest in what he said, he brought the letters up to her, and put them into her hand. She received them with much agitation, but evidently of a much pleased sort, and endeavoured to kiss his hand as he held them. He would not let her, but made an effort, with a countenance of the highest satisfaction, to kiss hers. I saw instantly in her eyes a forgetfulness, at the moment, that any one was present, while drawing away her hand she presented him her cheek. He accepted her kindness with the same frank affection that she offered it, and the next moment they both spoke English and talked upon common and general



subjects. What they said I am far enough from knowing ; but the whole was too rapid to give me time to quit the room ; and I could not but see with pleasure that the Queen had received some favour with which she was sensibly delighted, and that the King, in her acknowledgments, was happily and amply paid."

It is in the relating of such interesting little incidents that the Diary becomes valuable from the standpoint of the historian as well as from that of a student of the eighteenth century.



COMEDIES OF THE COURT





## CHAPTER XX

### COMEDIES OF THE COURT

“THE dread and fear of kings” was quickly departing from Fanny Burney’s mind, and after that experience of hers which we have just quoted, its place was certainly taken by affection and regard. She could even see the comedy elements in a little incident of which a short time before she would certainly have thought with horror—nay, she could even write to her father describing it (he was the person whom it concerned most closely) with the greatest liveliness.

The Queen sent the Princess Elizabeth for her one evening, and when she obeyed the summons, looked smilingly at her, saying that she believed Miss Burney possessed something which she would like to borrow from her—it was a copy of Dr. Burney’s account of his German tour, which he had published thirteen years before under the title *The Present State of Music in Germany*. Her Majesty explained that her own copy was at Kew, but she wished the Princess Elizabeth to read the book without sending to Kew for it. Now it so happened that the copy which Miss Burney’s father had presented to her some

time during the year had been embellished by him with sundry underlinings and marks, emphasising the far from complimentary passages in the book dealing with the German people, and with the "uncouthness," not to say coarseness, of the life which he had noted in some of the provinces. It may be remembered that in his *Animated Nature* Goldsmith had adopted in some passages the same line of comment; and Fanny, remembering the underlinings, felt that it would never do to allow so flagrant a proof of her father's lack of appreciation of a nation that had sent a King or two and the latest Queen to England to pass into Royal hands. There was especially a strongly underlined passage dealing with German genius in Fanny's mind at the moment, and if Her Majesty were to see this, "'tis all over with us for ever," she thought. So she hesitated before going to fetch the book, making transparent excuses and causing her Royal mistress to assure her, in substance, that it should be returned without a dog's-ear or a thumb-mark.

Nothing was left for the apprehensive daughter of the censor of German manners but to hasten off for the evidence of his guilt; but she was mindful of the admonition "*Festina lente*," and gave herself time to collect her thoughts and elaborate a scheme of defence. But nothing better occurred to her than to make a statement to the Queen, assuring Her Majesty that the marks in the margin, as well as the remarks in the text, should not be taken *au pied de la lettre*—that the author was truly repentant in regard to them,



and that he fully intended in his next edition to correct some of his asperities and aspersions upon all German matters ; but she admits that she brought the book to the Queen with fear and consciousness ; and from this point the narration assumes the form of as perfect a comedy scene as may be found in Augier or Sardou—perhaps we should say Labiche, for it certainly has a *souçon* of the manner of Labiche at his best.

The soubrette, still withholding the volumes from the Queen, glibly suggested that she should carry them off at once to the Princess, who would be waiting, doubtless in great impatience, to begin her reading of them. We can see the “business” of the moment—the soubrette holding back the books, her mistress with her hand outstretched for them—almost touching them at times, and with a look of surprise on her face as she fails to grasp the force of the other’s insistence that they should go to the Princess without the delay of a moment. And then what a natural bit of dialogue :—

“Ma’am, this is a set my father was preparing for some amendment, as he wrote in haste and with the very recent impression of much personal suffering and ill-usage on his journey ; and therefore he now thinks that he was led to some rash declarations and opinions which he is earnest to correct——”

Followed by the gracious smiling Queen with—

“Indeed, it is but true that the travelling in Germany is very bad and provoking”!

She had the book in her hand at last, and opening

it, read aloud a passage respecting the street musicians at Frankfort, when—

*Enter the King.*

KING: "What are you about? What have you got there?"

QUEEN (*after Miss Burney has coughed and given tokens of great trepidation*): "'Tis her father's tour; I wish Elizabeth to read it, and my set is at Kew."

KING: "Oh, mine is here." (*King opens volume and reads to himself.*)

MISS BURNEY (*stammering and all in a quiver*): "Sir, this is a set my father was preparing for some amendment, as he wrote in haste and with the very recent impression of much personal suffering and ill-usage on his journey; and therefore he now thinks——"

KING (*paying no attention to her, turns to first page, and reads aloud*): "'From the Author.'" (*Looks at Miss Burney and laughs; she also laughs, but cheerlessly.*)

QUEEN: "Here are marks with a pencil."

MISS BURNEY (*visibly affected, speaks in a "horrid hurry"*): "Yes, Ma'am; those are only of places to be altered—but my father would be very sorry your Majesty should look at what he gives up himself!"

(*The Queen at once turns away from the book. The King, who has seen some of the compromising bits, looks at the trembling Fanny Burney in a "wickedly droll way," then turns over the leaves with suspicious rapidity.*)

KING (*reading*): "Very true indeed, and very just: he says an actor and a singer are the only people never allowed to have a cold or a toothache. (*To Miss Burney*) But pray, what does your father send you this set for?—to give your opinion of his alterations?"

MISS BURNEY (*"turning as hot as fire"*): "To see, Sir, what places he meant to alter."

QUEEN: "She used to copy for her father. Indeed, I think her father has a great loss of her."

KING: "And who copies for him now?"

MISS BURNEY (*demurely*): "I don't know, Sir."

KING: "Have you not any sisters left behind?"

MISS BURNEY: "Yes, Sir, one; but she has been so much of her time abroad that she forgot her English, and has not yet recovered it sufficiently for such an employment."

*(All are solemn: no one smiles at the notion of a young woman having so far forgotten her own language as to be unable to copy the words that she sees before her.)*

KING: "What does he do then?"

MISS BURNEY: "I fancy he copies for himself."

KING: "Suppose he should send any to you here?"

MISS BURNEY (*her sense of her duty to her father in visible conflict with her sense of her duty to her Queen*): "I—I should find time to copy it."

*(Enter Courtiers, who announce that the concert is about to begin.)*

*[Exeunt omnes.]*



PRINCESS ELIZABETH (*exultantly to Miss Port, next day*): "I am going to read Dr. Burney's *German Tour*: and I am quite delighted that I have Miss Burney's set, with all the marks of her favourite passages!"

Now all this which we have taken the liberty of putting in the form of a play is contained in Fanny's letter to her father; and it will be seen that the dialogue and the "business," as recorded by her, might really be taken from a scene in a comedy.

And Fanny Burney, who could scarcely have failed to perceive this, could yet refrain for years from attempting to write a comedy, because she had been assured that her first essay in this direction stood no chance of being a success!

The truth is that it would really be difficult to find any one with a finer sense of the elements of comedy in everyday life than that possessed by Fanny Burney. She relates another little incident that took place about the same time as the preceding, which illustrates her appreciation of the humour of a situation that might not be apparent to every one. Mrs. Delany had become so accustomed to send up to the Lodge for her after dinner that the equerries had reason to grumble at being deprived of their tea-maker; so in order to recompense them she determined to invite them to take tea with herself and Fanny at her house. It was, however, a tradition of the Court that the equerries should never leave the building in which the King remained; but one evening, on receiving Mrs.

Delany's invitation, they took their courage in both hands and went off after Miss Burney. They hoped to get back before they were missed ; and the moment they arrived they began to discuss what would happen if their absence should be detected, Colonel Goldsworthy being, of course, especially humorous in his conjectures. The King would never believe the report that he was not at hand, he affirmed, but would institute a search through the rooms in order to find out from which bedpost he had hanged himself—for nothing less than such an act of desperation could give an equerry courage to absent himself without leave.

In the midst of the merriment that followed the door was knocked at, and in walked the Queen and her youngest daughter ! The silence that ensued gave an aspect of guiltiness to the party. Fanny, having obtained the leave of her mistress to visit Mrs. Delany, knew that she had nothing to feel embarrassed about ; but it seemed possible to her that the Queen might think that she had induced the equeries to accompany her, and so she was nervous and waited for the gentlemen to decide whether they should make humble explanations or treat the matter with frank ridicule. The Queen, however, soon set them at their ease, and shortly afterward went away. The equeries did not feel greatly inclined to remain : they must have looked like schoolboys who have been discovered out of bounds by the headmaster.

In her account of this little frolic Fanny manages in a few skilful touches to give full value to the *contretemps*, trifling though it was, at the entrance of

the Queen, and by her omitting to report a single word that was spoken after Her Majesty had gone, to suggest the gloom that was the result of these schoolboys being caught *in flagrante delicto*.

Beyond a doubt Fanny was greatly cheered by the drolleries of Colonel Goldsworthy, many of which she records with great glee—with the joy of a maker of stories on coming upon something original. The equerry invited the whole tea-room to have supper with him some night in his town house, and gave a comic account of his *ménage*—how his domestics had accustomed themselves to rule him and how it was necessary for one to be very careful how one addressed them. He warned Miss Planta against saying a word to offend a maid of his, “an elderly person, so extremely tenacious of her authority that she frequently took up a poker and ran furiously about with it, after any of her fellow-servants who thwarted her will.”

So he went on, and the tea-room, usually so clouded by the presence of Mrs. Schwellenberg, must have echoed with laughter that could only take place in her absence, when the Colonel told them, apropos of the mention of the Bedchamber woman, whose name was Mrs. Ariana Egerton, of a page-boy that he had whose name was Methusalem.

“Pray, what do you call him for short?” asked Fanny.

“Why, ma’am, that was a great difficulty to me at first,” he replied. “I’d have called him Me, for shortest, but I thought the people would all laugh and



say, 'Ah, poor gentleman! it's all over with him now! he's calling himself when he wants his man!' And then I thought of Thusy. Thusy sounds soft and pretty enough; but I thought, It is like a woman's name—Susy; to be sure, thinks I, they'll all suppose I mean one of the maids; and then again, 'Ah,' say they, 'the poor gentleman's certainly cracked! nothing else would make him behave so comical!' And then I thought of Lem. But it's quite too much for me to settle such a set of hard long names!"

He ran on for a length of time in this strain of broad comedy monologue, and did not quit it even when his brother officer reminded him that it was time for them to put in their attendance at the usual concert.

From what followed, we gather that the concert was a function to which the ladies of the suite were not admitted unless by special invitation. The equerries themselves were permitted to hear the strains of Handel as the illustrious Caroline heard the administrations of her chaplains—through the half open door of the room beyond. The Queen sat in the drawing-room, while the privileged members of the suite remained in what the Colonel called "the fiddling-room."

"There I go," he complained; "I plant myself against the side of the chimney, stand first on one foot, then on the other, hear over and over again all that fine squeaking, and then fall fast asleep, and escape by mere miracle from flouncing down plump in all their faces!"

“What would the Queen say if you did that?”

“Oh, ma’am, the Queen would know nothing of the matter: she’d only fancy it was some old double bass that tumbled.”

After this broad comedy, the Diarist, like the true artist that she was, introduces a very mild bishop, who passes the obvious compliments upon Miss Burney and her delightful tea-making, and smiles with episcopal cheerfulness when about to say something quite ordinary. “The quietness, with the solidity of the conversation, joined to very real reverence of the bishop’s piety, made this evening more tranquil and less strained,” the artful Miss Fanny remarks; but she is artistic as well as artful, and she carefully refrains from quoting anything of this solid conversation. She saves her readers a deal of skipping.

A few days afterward her father arrived at Windsor and she entertained him at dinner, after which the King came to her room and at once entered into a conversation on musical matters with Dr. Burney. During the interview the latter, we are told, being totally unacquainted with the forms usually observed in the Royal presence, and so regardless or thoughtless of acquiring them, “moved, spoke, acted and debated, precisely with the same ease and freedom that he would have used to any other gentleman whom he had accidentally met.”

It required, however, all the resourcefulness of Dr. Burney’s daughter to find a right moment for presenting the Queen a short time afterward with

a poem which he had composed for her birthday. The poem was, she thought, very pretty, but she had a certain reluctance in going straight up to Her Majesty to say that Dr. Burney wished it laid at her feet. She apparently kept the copy of verses in her pocket ready for any promising opening, and to any one of imagination so prepared the looked for opportunity is certain to arrive. Fanny was not disappointed. The very day after she received it the Queen inquired casually if Dr. Burney still wrote. "A little," she replied; and when she next came into Her Majesty's presence—it was when her birthday was being kept—immediately after delivering her own congratulations, she took the poem out of her pocket, saying:—

"I told your Majesty yesterday that my father had written *a little*!—and here—the little is!"

The Royal lady received the tribute with a smile and a curtsy, and the daughter of the donor ran off.

"*She never has named it since*," she records; but whether she meant this reticence to be accepted as a token of the Queen's good-nature or her lack of critical acumen is an open question. We do not think that Fanny had any great confidence in her father as a poet; but considering the very humble standard reached in the Birthday Odes of the period, and, for that matter, any other period, it cannot be believed that Dr. Burney's effort in this direction was any less worthy of being accepted in the spirit in which it was offered.



The Queen's Birthday Ball at St. James's Palace took place the same night, and as Fanny had just recovered from an illness that had lasted several days, she was allowed to leave the ballroom "after the second country dance"; but after doing so and hurrying to the room where the company were supposed to wait while their carriages or chairs were being called, that wretched manservant of hers who had caused her so much trouble previously was not to be found. She sent for him, and, going downstairs, had his name called outside and also the names of her chairmen; but all to no purpose. She felt helpless to find her way to her own apartment, for the ballroom was separated from it by avenues, passages, and alleys, of which she knew nothing: she could not have found her way through them all even in broad daylight, and now it must have been past midnight and she was still in her ball-dress and wearing the Court feathers on her head. The Palace yard was wet with recent rain, but it had to be traversed, though in what direction she knew not.

After waiting in vain close to the outer door, she returned to the room upstairs, hoping that her servant would yet put in an appearance. A young clergyman offered her his services, and at last a hackney chair was procured. When she got in she told the men to carry her to the Palace.

"We are there now," they replied. "What part of the Palace?"

They had asked too much of her. She had

always gone across the courtyard in her own chair and had been deposited at the door without trouble ; but she had not the least idea how to direct these common hackney chairmen. She could only say, "Near the Park."

"But, ma'am, half the Palace is in the Park," said the kindly young clergyman.

"I don't know how to direct," she cried in distress, "but it is somewhere between Pall Mall and the Park."

The chairmen were equal to the occasion.

"I know where the lady lives well enough ; 'tis in St. James's Street," cried one.

"No, no : 'tis in St. James's Palace," cried the lady.

"Up with the chair!" shouted the second man. "I know best—'tis in South Audley Street ; I know the lady well enough."

The men were both drunk and could with difficulty stand, yet they insisted on lifting their poles and bearing her off in spite of her shrieks to be put down, and no one can say what the end of this extraordinary adventure would have been, had not the gallant and reverend young man come to her rescue, forcing the men to put her down and then escorting her back to the entrance which she had left, the fellows abusing him all the time.

All her apprehension was that she should not get to the Queen in time to attend upon her when retiring : the jewels that Her Majesty wore were to be placed in her hands in order to be brought

back to the Queen's House, the present Buckingham Palace. But what was she to do to avert the disaster that threatened her if she failed to reach her rooms? She was clearly now in such a condition as to be glad to accept any suggestion, and when the young clergyman put her into the chair once more and bade the bearers follow him, she felt quite relieved—yes, until the fellows ran the poles against a wall in the darkness, for they had entered a passage whence there was no outlet! The next start found them confronted by sentries, who threatened to run their bayonets through any one trying to pass them. The drunken chairmen shouted that they wouldn't be stopped; and when forced to release their burden, ran after her and her clerical escort clamouring to be paid half-a-crown for their trouble. He refused to be so imposed upon, but poor Fanny, anxious to get rid of the ruffians at any price, begged of him to give them the money, and he did so.

Here then was a situation worthy of being devised by the author of *Evelina* to display the spirit of one of her heroines and the resourcefulness of a young and handsome hero, not necessarily in clerical attire; but when the author of *Evelina* found herself in it she failed to appreciate its artistic possibilities. She could only think of the horror of the Queen's waiting for her coming to remove her feathers and to receive her jewels, and waiting in vain!

"We wandered about, Heaven knows where, in a way most alarming and horrible to myself imaginable,



for I never knew where I was. It was midnight. I concluded the Queen waiting for me. It was wet. My head was full dressed. I was under the care of a total stranger, and I knew not which side to take, wherever we came."

At last, like the distressed damsel in many a romance, modern as well as antique, she found herself facing an open door. To pass through was "the work of a moment"—one adopts the language of the best models of this form of composition—and then she was confronted by a gentleman who was a stranger to her, but who knew her name and offered to conduct her to the Queen's apartments. She accepted his offer with gratitude, and she found that she was just in time to save her credit with the Queen.

And how about the real hero of this extraordinary adventure? We know what his future would be in any well-balanced romance; and we are convinced that they would have lived happily ever after. But, alas, for the reality! The gentleman played his part with admirable grace: he called the next day to inquire if she had suffered by reason of the very trying night she had spent in wandering through the fastnesses of St. James's Palace yard, and her maid told him that she was well, and, like the disinterested young man that he was, he declined to leave a card or to disclose his name—he had thought her name was Mrs. Haggerdorn, having heard her inquire for Mrs. Haggerdorn's room, and he was amazed to learn that she was Miss Burney.

But, of course, they met again.

He was the young clergyman whom, as we have already mentioned, she recognised a short time afterward in the Robe-keeper's room at Windsor, seeking to be appointed to a better living than the small one which he occupied, and trusting to the interest of Mrs. Schwellenberg, of all people in the world, to be extended in his favour!

"I started, and so did he," wrote Fanny Burney, the damsel in distress whom he had rescued from the dragons in the form of hackney chairmen.

That was all. He made no attempt to play the part of Perseus in respect of the female dragon by whose side he now met her, and we leave him standing at a desk reading a passage from Josephus, and hoping that he will find himself in a snug parsonage when he gets through it.

THE TRAGIC MUSE





## CHAPTER XXI

### THE TRAGIC MUSE

EARLY in the same year, 1787, Fanny thought it well to have a thorough understanding with the Queen respecting the persons whom she might be permitted to invite to visit her when in Her Majesty's service; and not only so, but also in regard to the extent and variety of her acquaintances. She made excellent resolutions at the beginning of the year, accepting in the most unreserved way what she called her destiny, and now she showed herself quite prepared to act in accordance with this spirit of conforming her life and its interests to the existence she expected to lead to the end of her days. No renunciation of pomps and vanities could be more absolute than that which she was prepared to make at this stage. She placed herself body and soul, as it were, at the dictation of the Queen. Her Majesty was presented, practically, with her visiting list, and she was prepared to accept without a murmur whatsoever deletings Her Majesty might be pleased to make of her friends. She proposed to form no connection and make no acquaintance unless with the Queen's consent, nor even to continue those already formed but by the knowledge of the Queen. "And I

entreated her leave," she wrote, "to constantly mention to her whomsoever I saw or desired to see, that I might have the undoubted satisfaction of a security that I could run no risk, in the only way I feared it—that of ignorance."

These suggestions were certainly very unlike any that would have come from the independent Fanny Burney of six months before, and they showed a spirit of submission to the judgment of another that would be accounted extremely laudable had it been displayed by a flighty young girl going into domestic service for the first time; but such a woman as Fanny Burney had shown herself to be by her writings and by her friendships should have reserved a small corner of her soul for herself, most people of to-day will, we fancy, think.

The Queen, however, accepted her suggestions in the most gracious spirit, we are told—a fact which speaks volumes for her appreciation of the spirit that should animate a useful servant; and made such kindly comments on all that Fanny had said, that the latter confesses that her eyes were constantly filled with tears—indeed, a more satisfactory interview a mistress could scarcely hope to have with a maid. Fanny Burney had simply adopted the Oriental attitude of tradition, and prostrating herself before the Royal chair, had placed the foot of the occupant upon her neck.

But the Queen showed herself to be "liberal and noble-minded" and drew tears from Fanny's eyes "in several instances," and nothing could be more satis-



factory to all concerned, except perhaps those friends of Miss Burney's whom she could no longer meet unless by Royal permission.

But Miss Burney had certainly many opportunities of forming new friendships from outside. It will be remembered that good Mr. Smelt had suggested, when laying before her the many advantages of the situation that he came to offer her, the opportunities she would have of doing good turns to her family. No such favourable chance had she experienced, however, unless her being able to present her father's Birthday Ode can be so termed ; but it seems that the moment she took up her duties in the Queen's room she had been beset by petitioners begging her to lay their cases before Her Majesty. It appears to have been a recognised thing that the ladies of the Royal suite should be petitioned to present petitions, and Miss Burney was apparently singled out for this honour by a large number of people whose names she had never heard before.

One application was brought under her notice by Lady Lumm : it came from the sole survivor of "one of the old English noble families who was confined in Exeter for debt." The petition was prepared and Fanny laid it before the Queen, who thereupon informed her with great gentleness that she had done wrong in bringing it to her, and that of the many instruments of the same nature which she had brought, there was not one which she should not have refused to touch, as it was the duty of the Lord Chamberlain solely to receive them and deal with

them. Miss Burney then resolved to make no further attempts to play the patron, but she seems to have broken through her rule more than once, and she was certainly successful in a solitary case. In another that she records—that of a captain in the army who had been severely injured in the American war—she found herself incapacitated by the Queen's injunction ; but she contrived to do something for the man and his daughter out of own pocket.

Another stranger who approached her, but in a rather different spirit, was an Irishwoman, who wrote to her threatening to commit suicide unless she received a sum of money forthwith. Fanny wrote this person a long letter of remonstrance, pointing out how naughty it was for any lady to talk of taking her own life ; but she did not send any money, even though the same person showed that she valued her counsel by staying her rash hand and proposing as an alternative to employ it in writing a novel. The author of *Evelina* did not, however, prove her readiness to accept the suggestion as a sign of true repentance, and the correspondence dropped at this point, before it became involved in the discussion of the interesting question that has not even yet been fully dealt with by experts in ethics, whether suicide is not advisable rather than the perpetration of a bad novel.

Fanny Burney, who from her childhood had been an ardent playgoer, must have felt her exclusion from her friends on the stage more keenly than she did her exclusion from some of those whom the Queen

may have eliminated from her visiting list. She had still, however, some opportunities for theatre-going. The King and Queen had never been enthusiastic patrons of the drama, and by the time Fanny had entered their train they had become confirmed in their domesticity: their evening concerts at Windsor represented the "little music" after the high tea of the modern suburban villa, when "a few friends" are invited to partake of the artistic treat. The Princesses in their attitude toward the turgid tragedies of the period seem to have possessed some of that spirit of irreverence which Goldsmith may have initiated in some of his early essays. Fanny records in one of those instantaneous vignettes—we can think of no better name for them—that abound in her Diary, how the Princess Royal and her sister Augusta stood at the door of her room one day after talking to Bryant, and began to make fun of the tragedy kings and queens that they had seen. It was the younger lady, however, who affirmed quite gravely that some of the princesses whom she had seen on the stage looked quite as well as some she knew off it. It was the brothers of these happy girls who became so interested in the *personnel* of the contemporary stage as to cause them to extend their patronage even to the artificial plays in which their favourites appeared.

Upon one interesting occasion in 1787 the Junior Robe-keeper was in a box with "the whole Royal Family and their suite immediately opposite me," she records. The play was an improving one,



"clever, but containing a dreadful picture of vice and dissipation in high life." The epilogue was spoken by the beautiful and highly virtuous Miss Farren—that actress who has been held up to admiration as a pattern of prudence because, although she was engaged to the Earl of Derby for twelve years while his wife was alive, she never ceased to behave as she should. Fanny was leaning forward with her lorgnette directed toward this actress when she was sent shrinking back into the box on the delivery of two lines:—

"And oft let soft *Cecilia* win your praise ;  
While Reason guides the clue in Fancy's Maze."

What the lines meant exactly only an expert in eighteenth-century epilogue could say, but they occurred among others complimenting the lady writers of the period, and there is no mistaking the allusion to the most favourite novel of all produced by the bevy whom the writer had in his mind ; and doubtless a good many people in the house understood it.

But the springing of this compliment upon the author of *Cecilia* overwhelmed her. She was so astonished and ashamed, she says, she was almost ready to take to her heels and run, "for it seemed as if I were there purposely in that conspicuous place—

" 'To list attentive to my own applause.' "



Elizabeth Parson (afterwards Countess of Derby).

*From the pencil sketch by Daniel Huntington, R. A.*





To such a point as this may self-consciousness carry one.

The King did exactly the right thing in the circumstances—Miss Burney was not too greatly overcome, nor was she too shortsighted to be able to note his attitude—for he laughed heartily, raised his opera-glass to look at her, and the Queen following his example, soon all the Royal suite, Princesses, attendants and Maids-of-Honour were scrutinising her. Miss Goldsworthy, who was beside her in the front of the box, alone remained with her eyes on the stage ; and by sitting as far back as she could and using her fan as a screen, the over-sensitive Miss Burney managed gradually to compose herself.

Though none of the Royal Family spoke to her respecting the incident for some days, they all told Mrs. Delany that they were sorry for the confusion it had caused her. When the Queen did refer to the matter to her it was only to say :—

“I hope, Miss Burney, you minded the epilogue the other night,” meaning possibly that she hoped Miss Burney had not minded it. The King proved how excellent a memory he had for a trifling detail, for he remarked, “very comically,” Fanny records : “I took a peep at you—I could not help that. I wanted to see how you looked when your father first discovered your writing—and now I think I know.”

Truly an admirable apology for an act that required none. We have an idea that if the allusion to *Cecilia* had passed altogether unnoticed the author would have felt more greatly mortified than she had felt confused

at the moment. The fact of the King's remembering what her father had told him respecting *Evelina* was a finer compliment than that paid to her in the disconcerting couplet.

It is worth noticing that she thought so little of the complimentary couplet that she did not even give herself the satisfaction of gloating over it in the printed copy of the play; had she done so she would not have misquoted it as she did in her Diary. She says, "Imagine what became of my attention when I was suddenly struck with these lines, or something like them:—

" 'Let sweet *Cecilia* gain your just applause,  
Whose every passion yields to Reason's laws.' "

So she did not even take the trouble to verify her quotation! It was Mr. Austin Dobson who did so, and thus gave us another insight into her character, and afforded further testimony to the spontaneous way in which she "wrote up" her Diary for the recreation of her friends.

Later she paid a visit to the theatre to see Mrs. Siddons as Portia, but previously she had been deputed by the Queen to receive and to act as hostess to the great actress—the second one of stupendous virtue known to the eighteenth century. Mrs. Siddons was stupendous in every way, but emphatically in the matter of virtue. She came to Windsor to read to the Royal Family, and the play selected was *The Provok'd Husband*, a piece which, when read nowadays, does not suggest Mrs. Siddons's doing herself justice in any

part. But that is possibly because we have formed our opinion of her capacity from our knowledge of the parts in which she created her greatest effects. The two supreme exponents of the art of acting, David Garrick and Sarah Siddons, lived during the second half of the eighteenth century and are not to be judged by the same canons that apply to others. And though the range of Mrs. Siddons was much narrower than that of Garrick—that is to say, the range of parts in which she was supreme—yet it is quite possible that in the reading of a play, which she would be bound to take in a lower key than she would have struck if representing a single part on the stage, she would achieve as great a success as Garrick would have done under the same conditions.

We should like to be able to refer to Fanny Burney for some information that would enlighten us on some other interesting points in this connection; but unhappily she was unable to make any record of this reading. Only the Royalties were permitted to be in the room with the reader; the members of the Household were allowed to find any place they might in one of the ante-rooms, and Miss Burney, having had Mrs. Delany with her the greater part of the evening, was unable to arrange matters so that she might at least have heard a snatch of dialogue filtered through the brocades of the *portière*.

We have, however, a finished record of her impression of Mrs. Siddons herself; and the result of reading this is to convince us that Mrs. Siddons never was herself, even when the smallest audience was present :



she was always Mrs. Siddons the actress — Mrs. Siddons as *The Tragic Muse* of Sir Joshua Reynolds. She took herself with enormous seriousness. She disliked Garrick, we know; but she must also have despised him because he was always ready to play the fool for the amusement of a couple of children, or to imitate Johnson or Boswell's imitation of Johnson until every one present was convulsed, or to sit on the knee of Oliver Goldsmith declaiming, as no man that ever lived could declaim, a soliloquy of *Hamlet*, while the Irishman made ludicrous gestures with his arms. That was Garrick's fun, and it was despicable in the eyes of the stately lady who was shown into little Miss Burney's room to enable little Miss Burney (though she knew it not) to paint her portrait with touches so decisive as to allow of our seeing her as plainly before us as we do when we stand before Sir Joshua's stately portrait or Gainsborough's noble canvas, over which he swore strongly because of the length of the lady's nose, which threatened to spoil a picture in maintaining the portraiture. Mrs. Siddons strode into the little room of the Junior Robe-keeper, not knowing that she was going to sit for her portrait. But that did not matter: Mrs. Siddons carried herself on all occasions as if she were sitting for her portrait, and it is to Fanny Burney we are indebted for the information.

"I found the Heroine of a Tragedy," she wrote to her sister, "sublime, elevated, and solemn. In face and person truly noble and commanding; in manners quiet and stiff; in voice, deep and dragging;

and in conversation, formal, sententious, calm and dry. I expected her to have been all that is interesting ; the delicacy and sweetness with which she seizes every opportunity to strike and captivate upon the stage had persuaded me that her mind was formed with that peculiar susceptibility which in different modes must give equal powers to attract and to delight in common life. But I was very much mistaken. As a stranger I must have admired her noble appearance and beautiful countenance, and have regretted that nothing in her conversation kept pace with their promise ; and as a celebrated actress, I had still only to do the same."

No more firmly drawn sketch—or one that carries with it such an impression of accuracy in drawing, could be imagined. After so admirable an analysis it was unnecessary for the writer to enter into a consideration of the origin of any quality that she attributed to the great actress : she was well aware of this fact, and was content to observe that she did not know whether Mrs. Siddons had been spoiled by her fame and success, "or whether she only possesses the skill of representing and embellishing materials with which she is furnished by others." She acknowledged herself to be disappointed in the great actress.

Being a conscientious artist, Fanny Burney refused to allow herself to abate one jot of what she believed to be a faithful record of the impression produced upon her by her stately visitor, although the latter had said, almost the moment she was seated, that

"there was no part she had ever so much wished to act as that of *Cecilia*."

Surely the creator of *Cecilia* could never hope to receive a greater compliment than this. She never had received so great a compliment; and yet there was her sketch of Mrs. Siddons as Mrs. Siddons appeared to her. She would not return compliment for compliment.

And then she gives us in a sentence a picture of the timid Fanny Burney looking with something akin to awe in her eyes at the tranquillity of the lady who was about to step into the presence of Royalty and be the central figure in the Royal circle. "She appeared neither alarmed nor elated by her summons," we are told, "but calmly to look upon it as a thing of course, from her celebrity."

The author of *Cecilia*, who was so perturbed by the mere allusion to herself in the epilogue to a play, must have been ready to pray to the Tragic Muse to be granted even the smallest portion of her spirit, as she watched her sail past the lackeys at the door and down the corridor into the Presence, as calmly as if she were only going to pay a visit to a man of genius, such as Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The Royal command had been sent to Mrs. Siddons through the Harcourts. She had been staying with Mrs. Harcourt—the flippant pouting lady who had appeared during the last hour of Fanny's visit to Nuneham—for a week, and when the summons to the Palace came, Mrs. Harcourt and Mrs. Gwyn—the "Jessamy Bride" of Goldsmith's famous rhyming



epistle—had worked their hardest to fit her out for this appearance of hers at the Queen's Lodge, for she had brought with her to the Harcourts' only ordinary clothes. Mrs. Siddons, in spite of her stateliness, did not hesitate to tell this to Miss Burney.



3

**THE CARICATURIST**





## CHAPTER XXII

### THE CARICATURIST

IT was altogether a very interesting evening for Miss Burney, for though she did not go to hear the reading, the proximity of Mrs. Siddons suggested a theatrical *causerie* when the equerries were having tea in her room. The Duke of York was staying at Windsor and had brought with him his equerry, who was none other than Mr. H. W. Bunbury, one of the best caricaturists of the day, and a gentleman of fashion besides. He chatted incessantly with Fanny on the subject of plays and players—Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jordan, Le Tessier and Shakespeare—all were touched upon by him in turn; and when the voice of the Duke of York was heard calling down the corridor for Colonel Goldsworthy, off that gentleman hurried, but Mr. Bunbury would not be hurried. He continued chatting. He did not mind losing the beginning of the play—"I think I know it pretty well by heart," he said. And then he began to quote from the opening scene—" '*Why did I marry?*' " acting and rattling away until the voice of the Duke of York sounded once more—"Bunbury, you'll be too late!" and off he rushed without waiting to drink the tea which had been poured out for him.

At this time Bunbury and Colonel Gwyn were together at the Queen's Lodge, the one in attendance, as has just been mentioned, upon the Duke of York, who had just come to England after an absence of seven years in Holland, and the other upon the King. The two men had married sisters, the beautiful Miss Hornecks. Catherine, the elder, was the "Little Comedy" of the rhymed epistle of Goldsmith, and the wife of Bunbury, the other was Mary, the "Jessamy Bride." They were both handsome girls—Fanny Burney scarcely ever mentions Mrs. Gwyn without an allusion to her beauty; and there is the valuable testimony of Sir Joshua Reynolds's canvases to bear out her judgment on this point. He painted the sisters separately and afterward together. They were both devoted to Goldsmith, and during the last years of his life he was constantly in their company, going with them and their mother on their tour through France—Goldsmith's autograph letter to Reynolds relating to this was sold last June (1911) for £280—and subsequently being their guest at the Bunburys' house at Barton, in Norfolk. When the news of the poet's last illness reached them they hurried away to his bedside, but were too late to see him alive. He had actually been put into his coffin, but they caused the lid to be removed, and after taking a last look at his homely features, his "Jessamy Bride" cut off a lock of his hair, which she carried with her set in gold until her death. The locket with this relic was sold at Christie's in the year 1899.

When Bunbury arrived at Windsor with the Duke



of York he had been married for sixteen years. So soon as it was understood that he was coming, there was a considerable fluttering among the members of the Household. They had a great respect for his powers as a caricaturist, and many of them seemed to believe that he would pay them the compliment of "taking them off." There was, however, one notable exception to those who feared his exercise of his skill at their expense. This was Mrs. Schwollenberg. She was confident that no one could see anything about her to invite caricature. "I have no hump," she cried triumphantly, when the others were in trepidation. They must have looked at her queerly when they heard the boast. It was not the hump, but the horns, that they knew Bunbury would endow her with if he were as well acquainted with her as they were. It would be interesting to go through Bunbury's drawings and etchings to-day with a view of identifying some of these people whom he "took off" in his own way. We know how admirably he reproduced Oliver Goldsmith, exaggerating only such peculiarities of his face as suggested, with a force that no student of humour could resist, such treatment. Bunbury had a light touch, and nothing of the grossness of Gillray or the repulsiveness of Rowlandson. He may be accounted the originator of the modern art of caricature. There are still a few artists who maintain the traditions of Gillray and try to raise a laugh at the protuberant paunch and the putting of a swine's snout on a human face, but the majority, as we know, achieve more memorable effects

by the daintier methods that mark the combination of the true observer and the true humorist.

We know what Bunbury was as an artist, and the Diary gives us Fanny Burney's impression of him as a man. A good deal which she tells us she found to his detriment does not affect us in the same way. She thought that his conversation was too easy and that his principles, as he expounded them gaily, were deficient in rectitude. He was also, she feared, incautious in his criticism of the people about them, though she hastens to affirm in his favour that he had nothing but good to say about the Duke of York. One can quite understand how shocked the discreet Miss Burney must have been at the frank opinions expressed by the artist, and at his failing to lower his voice to a whisper of awe when he referred to some of the members of the Royal Family and their ways. But we find ourselves wishing most heartily that she had seen her way to borrow a little of his incautiousness in this direction ; for in reading her accounts of many matters relating to the Royalties we are always wondering how much she kept back. He spoke with "an innate defiance of consequences," she tells us, and that is exactly how we should like her to have written.

Bunbury was ready to talk about the theatre from morning to night. "He acts as he talks," Fanny records, "and seems to give his whole soul to dramatic feeling and expression. Love and romance are equally dear to his discourse, though they cannot

be introduced with equal frequency. Upon these topics he loses himself wholly—he runs into rhapsodies that discredit him at once as a father, a husband, and a moral man. He asserts that love is the first principle of life, and should take place of every other; holds all bonds and obligations as nugatory that would claim a preference; and advances such doctrines of exalted sensations in the tender passion as made me tremble while I heard them.”

Now we must confess that, just as the good Dr. Watts’s vivid account of the sluggard forces us to envy, and to make up our minds to do our best to follow the example of the person held up for our reprobation, so we are led to believe, from Miss Burney’s shaking of her head at Bunbury, that he was both a brilliant man and an original thinker. The want of regularity in his mode of thought she should have known to correspond with the motions of a comet; and her acquaintance with the irregularities of such a body must have convinced her that it is these irregularities that make it much more interesting than a fixed star. In the estimation of the astronomer a comet is just as much a “heavenly body” as his *Alpha Ursa Minor*, whose variations are too insignificant to be registered except in the *Nautical Almanac*.

She makes us understand that Bunbury was a brilliant man, who, in spite of his equerryship, excepted his soul from his service to Royalty, and did not bind himself to speak in whispers. We have no difficulty in perceiving this from Miss Burney’s remarks in regard to his admiration or affected



admiration for *The Sorrows of Werther*—he adored the book, she tells us, and would scarcely believe that she had not read it—still less that she had begun it and left it off “from distaste at its evident tendency.” “I saw myself sink instantly in his estimation,” she adds; “though till this little avowal I had appeared to stand in it very honourably.”

Of course, no one can have the least difficulty in perceiving that the caricaturist, having taken the measure of this prudent Miss Burney, magnified her excellent quality by his art until it became prudishness, and then proceeded to shock it, even pretending that she had fallen in his estimation because she told him she thought that *Werther* had a dangerous tendency. We have a suspicion that Mr. Bunbury would have found as congenial a task in caricaturing the sentimentalities of *Werther* as did his brother caricaturist (on the literary side of the art) who saw his chance when the lady “went on cutting bread and butter.”

We have also an impression that if Bunbury had remained in her vicinity for longer Fanny would have found her life easier; she might also have seen her way to put into practice some of those schemes of rebellion against the traditions of the Queen’s Lodge which she was meditating during her first year, but which she had never quite enough daring to carry out. But we are certainly indebted to her for a thoughtful sketch of an interesting man.

It is amusing to note the consternation that came upon the ordinary members of this commonplace

Household when their stagnation was threatened by the sudden descent of Brains in their midst. They looked with suspicion upon the arrival of Fanny Burney the writer, foreseeing the possibility—they flattered themselves into believing it to be a certainty—that they should be “put into a book”; and when Bunbury flashed in upon them they expected that he would have out his pencil in a moment and “take them off.” The amusing thing too, in this connection, is that it was the men who were afraid of Miss Burney and the women who were apprehensive of Mr. Bunbury. Happily, however, the threatened danger passed away; the duplex terror ceased to cast its shadow over the Household. The Duke of York, his parents’ joy, hurried off to the discharge of those military duties which gradually developed into those of Commander-in-Chief (discharged with such unusual incompetence as entitled him to a memorial column); and he took with him his dangerous equerry; and Fanny Burney had, it was thought, given up putting any of her associates into books, having given up writing books altogether; so once more stagnation was able to hold its sway, none making it afraid.

It was not to be expected that any of the humdrum Household should be as shrewd as Walpole in foreseeing the Diary that should immortalise them—the equerries, the Ladies-in-Waiting, the Readers and the chaplains. Of the last named the least apprehensive, we are sure, was the Rev. Dr. Shepherd, who was Canon of Windsor and “Master of Mechanics” to the King—there seemed to be no end of strangely

styled officials. No doubt this person discharged his duties mechanically enough, as one would expect from a chaplain of long standing; but what his actual qualifications were that entitled him to be called a Master we are not informed. He was, however, an F.R.S. He may have become so in consequence of his mastership, or he may have obtained his appointment because of his fellowship. At any rate, he was the man to get on in the world; or if he failed, it would not be by reason of any diffidence on his part lest he might not be able to fill any post with great advantage to his employers.

He found out Fanny during the exciting week of the Duke of York's visit, and paid her an interminable visit, dilating on his own perfections more floridly and more flagrantly than a man in a farce, and giving her the story of his life, assuring her that she could not but be delighted to hear it, especially as he had got everything "by his own address and ingenuity." We have not time to talk of address and ingenuity nowadays: we simply call the combination of the two "cheek."

"I could tell the King more than all the Chapter," he assured her blandly. "I want to talk to him, but he always gets out of my way. [The wise King!] He does not know me. He takes me for a mere common parson, like the rest of the canons here, and thinks of me no more than if I were only fit for the cassock—a mere Scotch priest! Bless 'em—they know nothing about me. You have no conception what things I have done! And I want to tell 'em all



this—it's fitter for them to hear than what comes to their ears. What I want is for somebody to tell them what I am."

Fanny proves by what she wrote of him that he could hardly have come to any one more competent to discharge such a duty; but it is doubtful if he would have been satisfied at the result of her doing so. She herself did not think the task necessary. "They know it already," was, she tells us, what she thought, before he went on from his general panegyric to refer to his own preaching, which he assured her would be just to her taste—he went so far as to threaten her with a sermon when he should be next in residence.

"I think I preach in the right tone," he went on, "not too slow, like that poor wretch Grape, nor too fast, like Davis and the rest of 'em; yet fast enough never to tire them. That's just my idea of good preaching."

He was very desirous for her to visit his apartments; but she was compelled to disappoint him in this particular. It would be interesting to know on what grounds the amiable Mrs. Schwellenberg, a few months later, assured Fanny that if she, Fanny, played her cards well this Dr. Shepherd would marry her. He only wanted a little encouragement, she said in her own way. But Fanny somehow had self-control enough to resist the dazzling prospect of being in such a position as would enable her to judge whether or not the gentleman overrated his own excellences.

It was the happy visit of the Duke of York that

brought about a *rapprochement* between the Prince of Wales and his Royal parents. But Fanny Burney is, of course, too prudent to do more than lament the estrangement and rejoice at its termination. She does not waste many pages over the Heir Apparent. He had done his best to emulate the family tradition by quarrelling with his father at the earliest opportunity. He had begun early to study for that profession of profligacy of which he remained for many years the most distinguished exponent; and before Fanny Burney had come to Windsor he had married Mrs. FitzHerbert, and was living with her at Brighthelmstone. The poor King, who had caused the celebrated Marriage Act to be passed in 1771 for the protection of his brothers, found its machinery powerless to save his own son from a far-reaching indiscretion.

It was only within the province of the literary Robe-keeper, however, to refer to His Royal Highness in so far as the estrangement had a bearing upon her mistress; and she contrives to introduce a note of pathos into a very unpromising theme when she describes how Her Majesty one day read to her aloud a paper in the *Tatler* about "a young man of a good heart and sweet disposition who is allured by pleasure into a libertine life which he pursues by habit, but with constant remorse, and ceaseless shame and unhappiness."

The Queen's eyes were glistening while she read, and the sympathetic Miss Burney could not fail to understand how the mother believed that the

description applied with marvellous accuracy to her eldest son. It required the accommodating vision of a mother to see the resemblance between the soft-hearted young amateur libertine and the heartless Prince who was a professional *roué* before he was twenty-five. Her thoughts may, however, have reverted to his boyish escapades with no more harm in them than the ruin of his pretty Perdita.

The Prince came to Windsor to meet his brother, and his father fell on the neck of the prodigal and kissed him; the whole Household rejoiced, and no doubt a joint of veal figured at the head of every dinner-table in the building.

Fanny saw him occasionally at this time. Once he came suddenly in upon her when she was with Mrs. Delany, and described to her his villa at Brighthelmstone, telling several anecdotes of his adventures there. He seemed, she says, anxious to entertain Mrs. Delany and her niece. Beyond a doubt an account of some of his adventures at Brighthelmstone could be made entertaining; but His Royal Highness probably tempered the entertaining features of such as he narrated to the ear of a lady of eighty-seven. Had he confided to any extent in Miss Burney she would have been compelled to summon to her side the brother of her friend Miss Bowdler to prepare the record for publication on the lines he adopted in his *Family Shakespeare*.

Later, when she was with the Queen one night, he thumped at the dressing-room door with such



violence that Fanny thought he had come with some dreadful news ; but he explained that he had only looked in to mention that some beautiful Northern Lights were visible and to advise his mother to look at them through the gallery windows.

THE PAGEANT OF IMPEACHMENT





## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE PAGEANT OF IMPEACHMENT

IT was in November, 1787, that some of the newspapers began to busy themselves about Miss Burney. Her father brought her a paragraph that appeared in the *World* to the effect that she had resigned her place about the Queen and had been promoted to attend the Princesses—"an office far more suited to her character and abilities, which will now be called forth as they merit."

As that paper was not taken in by the Royal Family she flattered herself that the paragraph would escape notice; but the very next day she learned that every one was speaking of it, though a second paragraph had appeared to the effect that the announcement was premature. The Queen introduced the subject the same night, and being interrupted, returned to it the night following, when Fanny assured her that so far from having a wish for such promotion as was mentioned in the paragraph, Her Majesty did not bestow a smile upon her that did not confirm and secure her attachment; and they separated on such affectionate terms that Fanny cried out when alone:—

"Oh, were there no Mrs. Schwellenberg!"

(It was on the very next day that her eyes were frightfully inflamed by Mrs. Schwellenberg's brutality in refusing to allow the carriage window to be pulled up.)

But there can be little doubt that the paragraph in the *World*, though unofficial, and without foundation, represented what a good many people were saying on the subject of Miss Burney and her "place"; and before a year had passed another newspaper was making free with her name.

"The literary silence of Miss Burney at present is much to be regretted," said a paragraph. "No novelist of the present time has a title to such public commendation as that lady; her characters are drawn with originality of design and strength of colouring; and her morality is of the purest and most elevated sort."

This panegyric was very distasteful to the lady to whom it referred. All her thoughts at that time were directed to averting the wrath of her oppressor—to endeavouring to give her vile temper and abominable nature no chance of being aroused; and she knew that any word that was spoken or written reflecting favourably upon herself meant an outburst of envious passion on the part of that hag; and just then the Schwellenberg volcano was in a state of such sensitiveness that, as the flinging of a stone into the crater of a volcano that is temporarily quiescent may cause an outburst, the smallest incident would, Fanny knew, be sufficient to produce an eruption of violence and abuse. This knowledge

made the appearance of the newspaper paragraph seem an intolerable impertinence rather than the compliment it was designed to be.

Between the publication of these paragraphs, however, she had been privileged to attend the opening of one of the most celebrated functions in the history of England—the Impeachment of Warren Hastings at the bar of the House of Lords. The Queen provided her with two tickets for the opening day, but it would be going too far to say that but for her connection with the Court she would not have enjoyed the privilege of being present upon this occasion. She was the friend of a number of the most distinguished persons associated with the trial, and any one of them would have been in a position to present her with tickets had she needed them.

Several accounts of this great trial have been published; some have treated it from the standpoint of picturesqueness, with little reference to its historical value, and others have ignored all but its purely legal aspects. Several have referred to it as if it had been organised solely for the display of the splendid oratorical outbursts of Burke and Sheridan, ignoring the significance of the trial itself and the gravity of the issues; but the most widely read of all is that which was written by Lord Macaulay in his most picturesque style, and with that splendid disregard for every detail which, however essential to the accuracy of the true picture, threatened to interfere with the effect of the picture he meant to paint. From Fanny Burney we get a rambling



personal and intimate account of some bits of the opening scene—a very womanly account of it, the account of an avowed partisan of the impeached, and of one who was quite ready to give her verdict, as a true woman will in similar circumstances, in accordance with the impression he produced upon her before the proceedings had quite begun.

The one thing that strikes us about Fanny Burney's account is its life. It is the only account we have in which there is a breath of life. All the others are nothing more than highly coloured pictures painted on canvas, some with more or less development of a distinct scheme of chiaroscuro—Macaulay's foremost among these—some with more or less rectitude in regard to perspective, but all inanimate, though with a vast pretence of animation. Fanny Burney's, with no touch of colour, with none of that element known as word-painting, has the breath of life in it. Macaulay's is not really so much a description of a scene of life as it is a steel engraving of a painted picture—perhaps it would be better to call it an able dramatic critic's account of an admirably mounted play; that is possibly why it will ever remain the most popular of his great achievements. He was one of the most competent dramatic critics that ever lived, and so he was most fully equipped for describing the greatest piece of Party stage-craft ever devised in England. One day Fanny Burney brought her sailor brother with her to the trial. It was on the

second day of the harangue of Edmund Burke, and his eloquence was resounding through Westminster Hall. "When will he come to the point?" growled the man whose life was spent in action, not in acting. "When will he come to the point?" "These are mere words!" "This is all sheer detraction!" "All this is nothing to the purpose!" and so forth. That was the running fire of comment kept up by this aspirant to the command of a frigate of thirty-two guns, and Fanny's quoting of his words apologetically, referring to him as "our keen as well as honest James," gives us a better idea of the stagginess of the whole affair than any account we have of it, outside Macaulay. There is the criticism of a critic of life upon a stage play, and it seems to us to be worth a good deal more than the amplest deliverance of an intellect accustomed only to gauge effects from the standpoint of the drama.

Of course Fanny Burney was a partisan of Hastings. She had known him for some years, and had frequently visited his wife. Her brother-in-law had been Warren Hastings's private secretary. In addition, the Queen was on the side of Hastings, and she was on the side of the Queen. It was in this spirit that she entered Westminster Hall between nine and ten o'clock and found it already crowded with Peers and Peeresses, Judges, Bishops, and all the leaders of fashion in town, to say nothing of "all those creatures that filled the green benches looking so little like gentlemen and so much like hair-dressers," as her neighbour, Lady Claremont,

put it, that she had considerable difficulty in learning their status and how such people had contrived to enter so distinguished a company, until some one obligingly informed her that these were members of the House of Commons, and we suppose that the information was equivalent to an explanation of the question that was troubling her.

At twelve o'clock the Managers of the Prosecution entered and Miss Burney "shuddered and drew involuntarily back" when Burke at the head of this hideous retinue made his appearance.

She had always liked Mr. Burke, and her regard for him must have been greatly increased by his lavish appreciation of *Evelina*; but now she shuddered, and in her eyes he was a changed man. She was not a dramatic critic, consequently she had no applause for an extremely effective entrance of the leading actor in the play on which the curtain had just been drawn up. If Burke should not prove the leading actor as he was the leading Manager, it would not be Burke's fault. He entered slowly and with a parchment scroll in his hand, "his brow knit with corroding care and deep labouring thought," she records, and we feel as if we were reading the stage directions for the chief actor in a play. We feel that Mr. Burke had rehearsed that entrance and that expression of countenance many times in front of a looking-glass, and that it took him several days to get them exactly right. But he succeeded at last, for that "brow knit with corroding care" was very different from "that which had proved so



alluring" to Miss Burney when they had first met and he had won her warmest admiration. "So highly as he had been my favourite," she says, "so captivating as I had found his manners and conversation in our first acquaintance, and so much as I had owed to his zeal to me and my affairs in its progress! how did I grieve to behold him now the cruel Prosecutor (such to me he appeared) of an injured and innocent man!"

After him came Fox, Sheridan, Windham and the others; but she failed to see what was the exact expression worn by any of them; they did not cause her a shudder, any more than did the Peers, Bishops, Princes of the Blood, or even the Lord Chancellor himself with his train-bearer. It was not until the Sergeant-at-Arms arose and called out to Warren Hastings, Esquire, to come forth in Court "to save thee and thy bail, otherwise the recognisance of thou and thy bail will be forfeited"—Miss Burney did not quote the summons quite correctly—that she trembled where before she had shuddered, and could hardly keep her place when Mr. Hastings appeared about ten minutes after his "awful summons," and made a low bow to the Chancellor and Court facing him. He had to execute several bows before he reached the bar and made a motion of dropping on his knees, but the voice of an official telling him he had leave to rise saved him from an attitude which Fanny regarded as one of shocking humiliation—strangely enough, considering it was the customary attitude

for a stranger entering the presence of the sovereign.

"What an awful moment for such a man!" she cries. "A man fallen from such height of power to a situation so humiliating! . . . Could even his Prosecutors at that moment look on—and not shudder at least, if they did not blush?"

We rather fancy that several of them would have been able to exercise sufficient self-restraint. The majority were, we fancy, thinking more about the figure they cut in the eyes of so large and fashionable an assembly than about the humiliation of Mr. Hastings. Every one who has been present at a great criminal trial must quickly have come to perceive that the man at the bar is treated absolutely as a negligible quantity by the judge and the counsel for the prosecution as well as his own counsel: he is only regarded as a silly fool of no consequence by himself, but one whose presence is unavoidable as an excuse for the exercise of a vast deal of cleverness, a vast deal of talking, a vast deal of wrangling, and the exchange of a vast deal of money. Warren Hastings was being impeached to give Burke, Sheridan, and the rest their chance of posing as the enemies of the Oppressed, and of displaying their eloquence to an audience of extraordinary distinction. Who was Warren Hastings that they should shudder at the sight of him, or blush for being the means of causing him inconvenience or humiliation? When Burke and Sheridan knew,

each in his turn, that they had done justice to themselves in their speeches, they must actually have liked Warren Hastings for giving them the chance of their lives. They would have been very ungrateful if they had not liked him. Assuredly they thought more of doing themselves justice than of doing any injustice to him. As Managers of the Prosecution they had no reason to blush for themselves. They had need only to blush for that system of Party Government under the compulsion of which they were acting.

And then came the Chancellor's formal explanation to the prisoner of his position and privileges; and Miss Burney perceived that the situation was too awful even for a hardened lawyer like Thurlow, for his eyes, keen and black, softened into some degree of tenderness while fastened full upon the prisoner; but she would not allow that the "prosecutors" were in the least degree affected by a formality which, she thought, touched every one else in the building, raising "the strongest emotions in the cause of Mr. Hastings." She was a thorough partisan.

After Mr. Hastings had assured the Court of his confidence that he would obtain justice, the reading of the charges began, and this part was like the entr'acte in a theatre or the performance of a Handelian fugue on an organ at a concert, for it was accepted as a signal for conversation, and it is at this point that Miss Burney becomes most interesting; though some time had still to elapse before she got rid of her emotional seizure



at the sight of the dreadfully harassed expression on the face of the prisoner. Only by the exercise of the greatest self-constraint was she saved from tears. What she was most afraid of was being seen by him. She begged the assistance of her brother and her friend Miss Gomme to enable her to avoid meeting his eye. She was not sure of her success, however, and consequently she felt inclined to resent the civility of a salutation offered to her by Mr. Montagu, the member for Higham Ferrers, who was in the hated Managers' box. She had the satisfaction of noting that he looked gloomy and uncomfortable, as if engaged in a business that he did not approve of.

But then what did she think when she saw her friend Sir Joshua Reynolds—him who had remained sleepless all one night while reading *Evelina*—actually smiling in the midst of the Committee? Well, she wished that she had not seen him, and that he had not seen her. Possibly he did not know till the day of his death why little Miss Burney had shrunk away from his well-meant smiles, and his well-meant attempt to exchange confidences with her, explaining in dumb-show that he had forgotten or mislaid his ear-trumpet. There is a bit of the real living thing that we have in Fanny Burney's Diary, but that is absent in the more finished descriptions of the scene. She begged her companion, Miss Gomme, to help her to avoid catching the eye of any of the other wretches in the Managers' box; but Miss Gomme was interested in one

of them, Gilbert Elliot—he afterwards became the first Earl of Minto and Governor-General of India—so she only laughed at Fanny's petition and asked why she should avoid the adverse Committee at all ; and before she could offer an explanation, another figure in that dreadful place had risen and was making a profound bow to her. This was Richard Burke, the elder brother of Edmund.

She had a short interval for conversation with the Mr. Crutchley with whom she had been on terms of such pleasant intimacy in the old Streatham days, but whom she had not seen since, when up jumped still another figure in the Committee box, with an inquiry after her health. This was young Mr. Burke, whom she had always thought well of, and she could not but be civil to him, even though he was actually standing within the precincts of the hated box.

She was taxed to the uttermost to conceal her vexation, as can easily be understood ; for her situation was certainly a difficult one. There were all her former friends apparently among the persecutors (they only called themselves prosecutors) of the man for whom she had a great admiration, and for whom—and this is much more to the point—the Queen had a great admiration. But she felt bound to respond to their civilities in the old way, lest they should fancy she had become spoilt through being constantly in the company of Royalty. But then there was Royalty in the form of the Queen herself with an eye on her, ready to mark how civil

she was to the men who had conspired together against Mr. Warren Hastings, whom Her Majesty held in the highest esteem. In addition, there was Mr. Hastings himself looking about him and almost certain to notice on what friendly terms she was with his persecutors! The thought that he might do so was insupportable. She must many times have wished (for a few moments) that she had not come to this splendid affair. Surely, she would have been more at ease in her own parlour, even though Mrs. Schwellenberg were shrieking at her.

She managed with some adroitness to get away from the young and amiable Mr. Burke, but before she had time to congratulate herself upon having at last escaped from the pertinacious band of Committee men, her brother Charles, sitting behind, bent down with the message that a gentleman wished to be presented to her. Who was he? Why, only Mr. Windham, the leading spirit of the Prosecution!



**MISS BURNEY'S TRIAL**



## CHAPTER XXIV

### MISS BURNEY'S TRIAL

MISS BURNEY must have felt that this was the last straw. The Fates were against her. In trying to avoid the Scylla of young Burke she had fallen upon the Charybdis of Mr. Windham. At first she thought that her brother was having his jest against her, and she made a reply to his announcement in this spirit; but she was quickly given to understand that Mr. Windham was actually awaiting her pleasure. It seems to us that from the moment she realised this she abandoned every attempt to escape from the toils of the Committee: they were too much for her. She gave in with as good a grace as she could. She remembered that this Mr. Windham was a gentleman of family and fortune and that his place in Norfolk was close to where her sister Charlotte and her husband lived, and such a connection was not to be ignored. Whatever might come of it she would speak to Mr. Windham.

And what did come of it was one of the most interesting chapters in her Diary—one of the most interesting chapters that she ever wrote, and one that in its power of bringing before our eyes



one of the most remarkable scenes in the Parliamentary history of England surpasses most of the efforts of the great word-painters that have dealt with it.

"There, with eyes reverently fixed on Burke, appeared the finest gentleman of the age, his form developed by every manly exercise, his face beaming with intelligence and spirit, the ingenious, the chivalrous, high-souled Windham," wrote Macaulay of this man at this great scene. There is the miniature of this man done on ivory. But to see the man himself, living and breathing and talking, we must go to Fanny Burney's Diary. And it is, we think, because we see Fanny Burney herself so clearly in the course of the conversation which she records, that we see Windham so clearly by her side as well as the whole scene in the crowded Westminster Hall upon that memorable day.

The Diarist is self-conscious at first. She is still thinking of Hastings and of the dreaded possibility that he will glance in her direction, and, seeing her in close conversation with one of his enemies, think of her as a traitress; and this being on her mind, she feels that she must do the best for him that she can—she feels that not for a moment must she yield an inch to those of his enemies who may seek to shake her confidence in his innocence of the charges brought against him. She knows nothing about the charges or about the rights or the wrongs of the case; she only knows that Hastings is innocent and that she must accept everything that may

occur as tending to make his innocence appear the clearer. This woman's reasoning would be contemptible were it displayed by Windham, but being displayed by Miss Burney it strikes us as being a perfectly natural womanly trait, that gives a vitality to the scene which could not be imparted to it by any other means.

We not only hear her talking to the "finest gentleman of the age," we *see* them talking together in that desultory way which is so natural to people of divided interests. It was not long, however, before Fanny Burney showed him in what direction her interest lay. He spoke of the striking spectacle before their eyes, and then gave her some encouragement by praising the demeanour of the Lord Chancellor. The Lord Chancellor was well known to be a friend of Hastings, so she thought it rather generous on the part of Windham, who was not, to say a good word about him. But there was one word made use of by the Chancellor in his brief address to the accused that this accuser could not let pass. He said that the Chancellor had alluded to the charges as "mere allegations." He had no business to qualify the allegations in a slighting way, Windham thought; but Miss Burney declared that she had not heard the unnecessary word; she thought that the Chancellor had been very fair—had he not referred to the accusers as "so respectable"? Windham could not but be mollified on being reminded of those flattering terms in which Thurlow had alluded to the Prosecutors, and then Miss Burney, who appar-

ently had never before heard a speech made in public, inquired what the cries of "Hear, hear!" uttered after the Chancellor had finished, portended, and he explained very fully.

Now it might reasonably have been expected that Mr. Windham, considering what his position was, would have made some attempt to conceal what was uppermost in his mind. It was only natural that Miss Burney, unaccustomed as she was to public speaking and the amenities of a public court, should dwell upon every point that struck her as having a bearing upon the issue; but we are surprised to find this man of affairs so ready to notice such small incidents as the proximity of Major Scott to the Speaker, who, said he, "is here as a sort of Representative of the King." Now, Major Scott had been Hastings's agent in England, and a fine bungler he had been too, for it was agreed that, but for his injudicious zeal, the impeachment would never have taken place. Windham's remark, however, suggested that an attempt was being made to show that Court influence was being exercised in favour of the accused.

And immediately afterward he called her attention to the attitude of the Archbishop of York—"See how he affects to read the articles of impeachment as if he was still open to either side! My good Lord Archbishop! Your Grace might with perfect safety spare your eyes, for your mind has been made up upon this subject before ever it was investigated! He holds Hastings to be the greatest man in the



world," he explained to Fanny, "for Hastings promoted the interest of his son in the East Indies."

This was hardly a remark to be made respecting a great dignitary of the Church by Macaulay's "finest gentleman of the age," least of all to the Queen's Keeper of the Robes; but what a touch of life and actuality his suggestion gives to the scene!

And then he glances at the accused and rhapsodises upon the change in his fortune, so lately having "nations at his command—princes prostrate at his feet! How he must feel it!" At any rate, Mr. Windham felt it. He found it necessary to look at the other side of the picture in order to nerve himself to do all that he had set himself out to do as one of the Prosecutors. "Oh, could those—the thousands—the millions—who have groaned and languished under the iron rod of his oppressions—could they but—whatever region they inhabit—be permitted one dawn of light to look into this Hall and see him *there*!—*there* where he now stands—it might prove perhaps some recompense for their sufferings!"

And yet he could tell Miss Burney some time later that he had not his speech prepared! Of course, he was just trying how some of his choicest flowers of rhetoric and rhapsody would bloom in the atmosphere of Westminster Hall. After this, we can quite easily accept Macaulay's picture of him as sitting "with his eyes reverently fixed on Burke." That "iron rod of his oppressions" had assuredly come out of

Burke's forge. Miss Burney's silence he took for acquiescence, for he went on to point out how wonderful an instance of the instability of mortal power was presented in the spectacle of Hastings a prisoner at the Bar—"a man whose power, so short a time since, was of equal magnitude with his crimes!"

This was certainly a figure of speech far beyond the bounds of the most extravagant colloquialism; and it is no wonder that little Miss Burney, not suspecting, as we are cynical enough to do nowadays, that the man was merely airing the oration which he had carefully prepared "a short time since"—"tuning up" as we would call it—began to wonder if it was really possible that he could believe all that—that Mr. Hastings could appear to him to be such a monster. Once more she indulged in a shudder while he spoke, and began to feel alarm to find him in such earnest. That was because she was so much in earnest herself. What she should have done was to make use of those enigmatical words which had followed the conclusion of the Chancellor's address, crying "Hear, hear!" in a whisper, and asking her companion if he meant to make use of that iron rod at the beginning of his address or to reserve it for the peroration; giving him her opinion that perhaps the effect of the comparison between the magnitude of the man's power and his crimes would be increased if it were made more alliterative. So one artist criticises another who has just taken a sketch out of his portfolio and asked for an opinion

upon it. Mr. Windham had a whole portfolio of phrases awaiting any suggestion that she might offer; but she thought that he wanted her acquiescence in his views regarding the policy of Hastings's administration in the East. An artist who exhibits a picture that he has just painted of Luther burning the Pope's Bull does not expect a critic to question him as to his soundness on the subject of the Reformation.

But Miss Burney had never been in either the House of Commons or a Court of Law, and so she made up her mind to take him *au pied de la lettre*; and she begged his leave to speak to him frankly, telling him that in her opinion it was impossible for any one, "not particularly engaged on the opposite side," to enter a court of justice without wishing well to the prisoner; and so she suggested by degrees her feeling in favour of Mr. Hastings; but he was really surprised when, a little later, she assured him that she was actually on the side of Mr. Hastings. He could scarcely believe that she spoke the truth, and all that he could advise her to do was to come and hear Burke and read the charges of the Begums—Burke and the Begums, that was his rallying cry to bring her to see the error of being prepossessed in Mr. Hastings's favour. "Come to hear Burke—to hear truth, reason, justice, eloquence! You will then see in other colours that man! There is more cruelty, more oppression, more tyranny in that little machine, with an arrogance, a self-confidence, unexampled, unheard-of . . . ."



So he went on, and artful Miss Burney gave him plenty of rope ; then suddenly she sprang upon him the fact of her acquaintance with Hastings, and of her knowledge of his being mild, gentle, and extremely pleasing in his manners.

"Gentle?" cried he incredulously.

"Yes, indeed ; gentle even to humility!"

"Humility? Mr. Hastings and humility?"

It was clear that against "Burke and the Begums" she was ready to cry "Hastings and Humility." She assured him that seeing him "so simple, so unassuming when just returned from a government that had accustomed him to a power superior to our monarch's here," had produced an effect upon her that nothing could erase.

"Oh, yes, yes," cried he ; "you will give it up! You must give it up! It will be plucked away—rooted wholly out of your mind!"

But Fanny would not hear of this, and Mr. Windham was compelled to draw her attention to the aspect of the accused. "'Tis surely," he cried, "an unpleasant one!"

He was now treating her as though she were an ordinary woman ; and so she showed herself to be ; for she remembered what many other people had noticed, that a strong likeness existed between this Mr. Windham and that Mr. Hastings with the unpleasant cast of countenance.

"How should he look otherwise than unpleasant here?" she cried.

This he admitted to be true ; but still thought

that his expression was against him. But this was due, we fancy, to his having looked too reverently into the face of Burke when the latter had declared—"admirably," Windham thought—that Hastings looked "like a hungry tiger, ready to howl for his prey." Mr. Burke, like the finished orator that he was, never neglected to introduce a touch of local colour. He probably said "a hungry Bengal tiger."

It is impossible not to admire the adroitness with which Miss Burney led the man on to listen to all that she had to say in favour of Hastings, or the art with which she moderated her eulogies of him. No ecstatic zeal to make him out to be a demi-god was hers; she only assured Mr. Windham that she had found Mr. Hastings to be a gentle, unassuming and interesting man. When Windham found it necessary at last to comment upon the indecency of the accused appearing upon this day in a coat that was not black, she must have felt that indeed she had reduced the arguments of his accuser to ashes.

Whether or not it was customary for an accused gentleman to appear in black, she was, she said, heartily glad that Mr. Hastings had not done so; for "Why should he feel so dismal, so shut out from hope?" she cried, and he answered, not at all pleasantly, we think, that he believed Hastings had not judged wrongly on that point.

Then, with an apology for being compelled to show himself in the Committee box, he left her; and she felt persuaded that never before in her life had

she been engaged in a conversation so curious. She defines her situation very clearly:—"The warm well-wisher myself of the prisoner, though formerly the warmest admirer of his accuser, engaged even at his trial and in his presence, in so open a discussion with one of his principal prosecutors; and the Queen herself in full view, unavoidably beholding me in close and eager conference with an avowed member of the opposition!"

It must be acknowledged, we think, that in such circumstances—in any circumstances—no one could have behaved better than she did. It would have been a great mistake for her to have avoided Windham. He would have told Burke of it, and Burke would have attributed her act to Court influence. But how could any one say that the Court was desirous of influencing people in Hastings's favour when the Queen's Keeper of the Robes had been seen in open conference with the moving spirit of the Prosecution?

And when it was all over Miss Burney had the satisfaction of feeling that she had done something for her friend at the bar. But she must have been credulous indeed if she fancied that Mr. Windham would delete a single metaphor or diminish a single trope from his speech denunciatory of Hastings because he had found out from her that Hastings was a kindly gentleman rather than Mr. Burke's hungry, howling tiger. He had borrowed Mr. Burke's tiger for studio purposes, and intended painting Hastings from this model, and was the animal to be wasted?



He probably thought—or tried to force himself to think—that little Miss Burney was, after all, more of a woman than an author, to allow herself to be duped by the plausible manners of the person whom he meant to achieve fame for himself by prosecuting to the very end.

But surely the way in which the scene is suggested, with scarcely an attempt at description, by Miss Burney—the way she shows us the different people jumping up to say a word or two to her—the way she points out the Archbishop reading his copy of the charges—the way she shows us Windham casting a glance, more or less furtive, every now and again at Hastings—the way she repeats the long conversation, noting its many natural interruptions, brings the whole spectacle before us very much more vividly than any closer attention to details could do. To be more exact, we might say that while other writers have succeeded in bringing the scene before us, she succeeds without any literary or even artistic effort in placing us in the centre of the scene itself. We see and hear everything clearly against that background of monotonous recapitulation of the charges which comes from one of the clerks.

And the moment Windham has left her, she is able to notice the grumbling of a man sitting quite close to her—and this is one of the most life-like touches of all—"What a bore!" he growls. "When will it be over?—Must one come any more?—I had a great mind not to have come at all.—Who's that?—Lady Hawkesbury and the Copes? Yes. A pretty girl

Kitty!—Well, when will they have done? I wish they'd call the question—I should vote it a bore at once!"

Fanny, just breathing evenly once more after all her strenuous conversation with Windham, felt shocked.

**MR. BURKE MAKES HIS SPEECH**





## CHAPTER XXV

### MR. BURKE MAKES HIS SPEECH

HER friend of the old days, Mr. Crutchley, returned to her side when Windham had gone. With him she felt on sure ground. Talking with him involved no intellectual strain. She had not to keep constantly thinking, What would the Queen say? What would Mr. Hastings say? They had a common topic on which they both agreed—"poor Mrs. Thrale!" That was how they both alluded to her, because, after living for a number of years with such a husband as Henry Thrale, a man for whom she could not have any regard, she chose to marry a man whom she could love and respect and who was worthy of her—worthy of the sacrifice of the fortune which she forfeited thereby, according to the terms of the grossly unjust will of her first husband.

Crutchley was sound on the Warren Hastings question, though he probably knew very little more about it than did Fanny herself, Member of Parliament though he was. He had voted consistently on the side of Hastings at every division on the impeachment question.

But Windham returned with the news that the plans for the Prosecution had been modified considerably, so that he did not know how soon he might be called upon to make his speech. He acknowledged that he had prepared something to say—we have taken the liberty of suggesting that he tried a phrase or two upon her—but now that his delivery of it was imminent, he felt—well, he showed that he felt inclined to moralise. “How strange—how infatuated a frailty has man with respect to the future!” he cried. “Be our views, our designs, our anticipations what they may, we are never prepared for it!—it always takes us by surprise—always comes before we look for it!”

So he maundered on with similar platitudes, repeating his moralisings, only with additional flowers and flourishes of rhetoric—“The day for which we have fought, for which we have struggled—a day, indeed, of national glory in bringing to this great tribunal a delinquent from so high an office . . . the glow of a public cause—a cause to support—to revive, to redress helpless multitudes . . . nothing has been left untried to obstruct us—every check and clog of power and influence,” &c., &c.—on he went, bringing out his phrases to hear how they sounded. And then, after exhorting her once more not to fail to hear Burke, he left her, and if she had not been thinking too much about the conquest that she had achieved, she would certainly have been very much inclined to cry “Hear, hear!” to the grumbling of the Member of Parliament in the next box who protested



against the boredom of it all, associating herself with the opinions which he had expressed so pithily. She had listened very patiently to Windham's conversational snatches "shot" (in silk mercer's parlance) with the rhetoric of the day, and it was probably this respectful attention of hers that had induced him to remain so long listening to what she had to say about the man in whose favour she was as greatly prejudiced as he was against him ; but when he suggested getting her some refreshment—she had doubtless need of it—she resolutely declined. Her sentiments on this point were as fixed as those of Shylock. "I will talk with you, walk with you, and so following : but I will not eat with you." No, she would have no refreshment at his hands, that were soiled in so base a cause as the one of which she confessed she knew absolutely nothing. It was a matter of principle with her : "Well as I liked him *for a conspirator*, I could not *break bread* with him," she recorded with underlinings, and of course in her hunger she felt all the satisfaction that so many of her sex have felt and still feel in suffering on behalf of a "cause."

"What pity that a man who should feel such impulsive right in the midst of party rage, should bow down to any party, and not abide by such impulse!" she exclaimed in her descriptive letter to her sister.

She did not think of the possibility of Mr. Windham's remarking to Edmund Burke on leaving her side :—

"What pity that a sensible woman like that Miss Burney will act upon the promptings of so dangerous

a guide as impulse, and embrace a cause of the merits of which she confesses she knows nothing, to the exclusion of any issue of reason and justice!"

But we cannot doubt that when the Robe-keeper was discharging her duties that evening, and relating to the Queen everything that had passed between her and Windham, her sense of justice and reason was exercised on behalf of the man who had given her so much of his time and attention upon an occasion of the greatest historical importance—an occasion on which he was one of the leading figures. With her usual reticence, which we greatly resent nowadays, she devotes only a few lines to the Queen's reception of all that she had to tell. But she mentions that Her Majesty was moved to tears, doubtless by that part of her narrative which referred to Windham's looking down upon Hastings and comparing his position in the East with his appearance when bending his knee at the bar at the other side of which were his accusers and his judges.

Little Miss Burney was, of course, modest enough in referring to her own achievement in inducing Mr. Windham to see how it might be possible for the man whom he was impeaching to be anything but the howling hungry tiger of Edmund Burke's rhetorical menagerie, but there can hardly be a doubt that, by the time she had finished her narrative of the conversation, the Queen had come to the conclusion that her Miss Burney was on the whole a more interesting person to have about her than the Haggerdorn or even the Schwellenberg. It is by recollecting the

many moments of interesting intercourse she had with her Junior Robe-keeper that we come to understand quite clearly how it was that when Fanny wanted to retire Her Majesty would not hear of such a thing, but held her by her side until a Sovereign even more powerful than herself threatened to deprive her, and the world, of the services of the lady whose skill of narration had moved her to tears.

It is to be hoped that, when Fanny mentioned her declining Mr. Windham's invitation to refreshment after her long day in Westminster Hall, good Queen Charlotte gave instructions for a large packet of sandwiches to be prepared for her when she next went to the great trial.

And this was upon a day when she would certainly need them most. It was upon the second day of Edmund Burke's great speech, and Fanny was to have gone under the wing of the Mistress of the Robes, but the Duchess of Ancaster, being indisposed, could do no more than send Fanny a ticket for another companion, and Fanny was fortunate enough to find that her brother James could accompany her to the Hall. We might be disposed to fall into Mr. Windham's vein of comment upon this incident, and exclaim how wonderful are the operations of Fate; for if the Duchess of Ancaster had not been indisposed and if Captain Burney had not been disengaged the world would be deprived of the healthy criticism of a man of action upon the incomparable performance of a man of words. We have already referred to the remarks made by the cool-headed sailor when the



great orator was at his best, carrying every one else along with him, and they form, in our opinion, a commentary which makes it possible for us to criticise Burke's rhetoric on a rational basis. Without the sanction of Captain Burney's comments uttered *sotto voce* as the orator went from period to period, one would indeed be bold to utter a word suggestive of detraction in regard to what has always been honoured as a masterpiece of rhetoric. It would be in vain to refer to an oration that has carried people off their feet, as it were, when one has only the copy in cold print before one. It is one thing to criticise the work of an orator and quite another to criticise the report of the words that flowed from him. We must judge of the power of oratory by its effect, and the instantaneous comments of Captain Burney, uttered as Burke's supreme effort was being made, indicate very clearly what was the effect of the oration on at least one cool-headed listener. After all that we have heard about this historical trial, and especially about the grandeur of the speeches of Burke and Sheridan, it would seem impossible to us that any word tending to reduce the whole to the ordinary level of human proceedings could be forthcoming from one who was present as an eager and active observer and listener. But when we read Fanny Burney's record of her brother's words, they seem to us curiously like the live voice of the Twentieth Century commenting upon the ghostly voice of the Eighteenth. The impressions of the man who refuses to be hypnotised when every one else

is under the spell of the hypnotiser are certainly worthy of attention, and so we are inclined to thank Captain Burney for his cool head, and his sister Fanny for her record of a few of the remarks he made when Burke was on his feet in front of them. Conscientious a reporter as she was, and an observer by instinct as well, every word that she has written in this connection but adds to the value of what she has to tell. She makes it plain that she was almost ashamed of her brother—that she considers him to have been rude and his remarks in bad taste. She refers to him with that toleration which one extends to simplicity—"honest James," she calls him, and rather smiles at his sailor-like outspokenness, and she hurries him away. She quotes some of his exclamations, but only some, we may be sure, and these the least emphatic. She does enough, however; people who have had experience of green-sea sailormen and the exigencies of command in the Navy can, without difficulty, supply the expletives and the adjectives incidental to the critical comments of Captain Burney, late of H.M.S. *Discovery*, upon the oratorical gunnery of Edmund Burke, M.P. A command of language is the best preliminary to a command of men, and we may be sure that Captain Burney, who took the trouble to learn a Polynesian tongue when carrying the "gentle savage" Omai from his native island to Captain Burney's, was to be depended on when the qualification of a lawyer's lingo was demanded of him.

"When will he come to the point?" inquired

honest Captain Burney while Burke soared. "These are mere words!" "This is all \* \* \* sheer detraction!" "All this \* \* \* is nothing to the purpose!"

Our heart warms to this honest Captain Burney, and our debt to his "honesty" can never be repaid. Amid all the artificiality of this great trial—the artificial forms and ceremonies—the simulated passion and laboured indignation of the great speech-makers—the unreal sentiments—the tawdry tags of antiquity that passed as wisdom, the straightforward comments of James Burney float to us as gratefully as a sea-breeze to the face of one coming from a heated ball-room. The atmosphere of the latter half of the eighteenth century is the atmosphere of a ballroom, and it is a relief to come out from it into the seabreeze of a natural expression of opinion by an unaffected man. The classical architecture of the great orations of Burke and Sheridan gives them the form of imposing structures, monumental structures, beyond doubt, but we are not so sure of the stability of their foundations; nor are we confident that the massive phrases which went to the building of them up did not tend to shut out a good deal of the sunlight of truth; and if Captain Burney's well-aimed shots went through them in places, letting daylight in for the benefit of generations to come, we cannot but feel that he is deserving of gratitude.

Perhaps the imagination of "honest James" was better trained than that of Burke himself, the exponent of "the sublime and beautiful," to appreciate the magnificent work that Warren Hastings had



accomplished in the East—to appreciate the greatness of his courage, his self-sacrifice, his ideals, as we would say nowadays, in snatching a great Empire from the destruction that threatened it and holding it for the Great Power that has held it ever since.

But of the greatness of the orations that accused the idealist of using for the accomplishment of his aims weapons instead of words there cannot be a question. When Windham said that the conclusion of Burke's speech was "the noblest ever uttered by man," he expressed an opinion that the greatest critics of oratory have endorsed. But we know that he spoke of its artistic greatness: it was a masterpiece of the art of oratory judged from the classical standards of criticism of that art, and so it must ever be accounted. It was conceived and delivered in accordance with the greatest traditions of the art.

Fanny Burney's criticism of all that she heard of it was the result of her looking at it from the same standpoint of the classical tradition. "All I had heard of his eloquence and all I had conceived of his abilities was more than answered by his performance," she wrote. "Nervous, clear, and striking was almost all that he uttered: the main business indeed of his coming forth was frequently neglected and not seldom wholly lost; but his excursions were so fanciful, so entertaining, and so ingenious that no miscellaneous hearer like myself could blame them! It is true he was unequal, but his inequality produced an effect

which, in so long a speech, was perhaps preferable to greater consistency, since, though it lost attention in its falling off, it recovered it with additional energy by some ascent unexpected and wonderful. . . . The sentiments he interspersed were as nobly conceived as they were highly coloured; his satire had a poignancy of wit that made it as entertaining as it was penetrating; his allusions and quotations, as far as they were English and within my reach, were apt and ingenious, and the wild and sudden flights of his fancy, bursting forth from his creative imagination in language fluent, forcible, and varied, had a charm for my ear and my attention wholly new and perfectly irresistible."

So much for her criticism from the classical and traditional standpoint of oratory. But then she changed her standpoint and considered it in quite a different spirit.

"Were talents such as these exercised in the service of truth, unbiased by party and prejudice, how could we sufficiently applaud their exalted possessor? But though frequently he made me tremble by his strong and horrible representations, his own violence recovered me, by stigmatising his assertions with personal ill will and designing illiberality."

That she could write what strikes one reading it nowadays as being an admirably sound and sane description of the great speech, fresh from hearing her brother's contemptuous remarks and the equally curt and pointed criticism of another man, her friend Crutchley, who had heard it all—"A comedy—no,

a farce; 'tis not high enough for a comedy," cried Mr. Crutchley. "To hear a man rant such stuff!" —shows how well-balanced were her mind and judgment.

She was not hypnotised by Mr. Burke's speech; and she went a long way to show the orator that this was so; for when Mr. Burke, the hero of the day, approached her and bowed "with the most marked civility of manner," her return of his courtesy was "the most ungrateful, distant and cold."





37

**FROM WESTMINSTER HALL TO  
FAUCONBERG HALL**





## CHAPTER XXVI

### FROM WESTMINSTER HALL TO FAUCONBERG HALL

THE third day of Miss Burney's attendance at Westminster Hall gave her an opportunity of comparing the oratory of Burke with that of Fox. Fox spoke for five hours "in a fury," and the origin of the fury was a decision of the Lords, who, Windham declared, were determined to save Hastings—a monstrosity that called for all the fury the Managers of the Prosecution could muster at a moment's notice. Fanny refrained from any comment upon the substance of the speeches, confining herself to describing the impressions that each produced upon herself; and the result of listening to Fox was to convince her that Burke was the more gentleman-like and scholar-like speaker.

On the fourth day she was again accompanied by her brother James, but unhappily she did not quote any of the comments which this critic may have thought fit to offer upon the proceedings. She had not much more than entered the Hall, however, when Burke went to her, but she felt bound to be colder than ever in her attitude to him, so that he soon turned away from her to talk to some one who would certainly not allow any foolish regard she might

have for a man of fallen fortunes to interfere with the warmth of her reception of the hero of the hour. The beautiful Mrs. Crewe was quite ready to compensate Burke for Miss Burney's reserve. But before he went to the Managers' box, he made her aware of the origin of one of the most telling effects in his speech. He had worked himself up almost to a frenzy of passionate declamation, when suddenly he gasped, and there was a terrible pause. His attempt to continue seemed likely to choke him. The suspense of his audience must have been breathless, and the relief intense when he was able to proceed.

And what was the explanation? He had swallowed a mouthful of cold water, and in his excited condition it had given him a momentary cramp in the stomach! The recipe may be offered to other orators anxious to produce a striking effect at a trifling inconvenience.

When Mr. Burke had disappeared Mr. Windham came to her side, and she gave him a more detailed summary of her impressions of Burke's great speech than she had written to her sisters; and reading this, we are the more convinced of the shrewdness of the comments of her "honest James." She told Windham that at first she was so carried away by Burke's narrative of murder and rapine committed at the instigation of Hastings, that she could not even glance at the prisoner; but when the orator proceeded to his own comments and declamation—when the charges of rapacity, cruelty, and tyranny

were general and "made with all the violence of personal detestation, and continued and aggravated without any further fact or illustration; then there appeared more of study than of truth, more of invective than of justice; and in short so little of truth to so much of passion, that in a very short time I began to lift up my head, my seat was no longer uneasy, my eyes were indifferent what way they looked, or what object caught them; before I was myself aware of the declension of Mr. Burke's powers over my feelings, I found myself a mere spectator in a public place, and looking all around it with my opera-glass in my hand!"

This very succinct narrative must have sounded terrible in the ears of the man whose ideal was Burke; but he contented himself by saying, "I comprehend you perfectly." Fanny was, however, in a critical vein, for she hastened to tell him just what she thought of Fox's speech, saying that she had a feeling throughout that the orator's passion was factitious, and that his display of violent indignation left her quite unmoved.

Then all at once they began to talk about Dr. Johnson, and, as usual, we learn more of what we are convinced was the real Johnson from these records of Fanny Burney than we do after wading through a volume of Boswell. When a man such as Windham could affirm that "there is nothing for which I look back upon myself with severer discipline than the time I have thrown away in other pursuits that might else have been devoted to that wonderful



man," we begin to understand what a force Dr. Johnson really was in England.

Later Sheridan came to her side, and him she received even more chillingly than she had done Burke; but he showed her that he not only recollected meeting her at Mrs. Cholmondeley's, but that he recalled the advice he had given her about writing a comedy. Of course this was not the moment for her to tell him, even if she had had the mind to do so, that she had taken his advice, and the result had been pronounced a failure by two critics for whom she had a warm regard; so after a compliment about *Cecilia* he walked away. He does not seem to have felt very deeply Miss Burney's coldness.

Then there was more speaking on the part of Burke, Fox, and others; a few witnesses were examined by these gentlemen with a view to bear out the charges made against Hastings, but their evidence was so distinctly in favour of the accused that "honest James" was set chuckling with delight, and the Lord Chancellor and other lawyers must have smiled at the lack of technical acumen on the part of the distinguished Prosecutors that allowed of their examining witnesses without becoming familiar with the exact nature of their testimony, or how far they were prepared to go.

Although Fanny Burney attended the celebrated trial occasionally as it dragged on, yet, the novelty of it having worn off, she makes few references to it of any length. After telling Windham how anxious she was to hear his speech—she told him so several

times—it might have been expected that she would show great disappointment when he mentioned that the charges which he had been studying with a view to an oration had been abandoned; but she did not waste much time expressing her vexation. It so happened, however, that she had a chance of hearing him one day when he had to speak upon the question of admitting certain evidence, and the result was to disappoint her extremely. He spoke badly and in an unpleasant tone, but as he was dealing with some technical matters, he could not well follow the example of his friends in straying from his text. Indeed, Mr. Windham, in spite of the attention that he paid to her upon every day they met at the trial, and her manifest liking for him, can by no means be said to come well out of the case. We have an impression that she began to be bored by the reiteration of his praise of Burke. Fanny agreed with him throughout so cordially that he seems to have suspected her honesty. She left him in no doubt, however, as to what was her opinion of his charge against the judges of favouritism for Hastings. She asked him if it was possible that he could be serious in suggesting that Hastings had bribed the Lords to be on his side. Why should they have made up their minds to this before the case was heard? she asked him.

“From the general knavery and villainy of mankind, which always wished to abet successful guilt,” was his reply; and from it we are led to revise some of the opinions we had formed of Mr. Windham’s

liberality and generosity. At any rate it shows to what a high point the feeling of those concerned in the case went, when so creditable a performer as Windham could not refrain from annexing the favourite policy of the pettifogger of a petty sessions.

We pass with some relief to the opening day of the Defence, when the same policy was openly adopted by the Managers. But in spite of the evidence which they had before them of the character of Hastings they showed that they had underrated his determination. Was he the man to be stopped in a speech defending his own honour—clearing himself from the imputations that had been hurled at him by the violence of the whole box of Prosecutors—because of some technical flaw that they found in his address? First Mr. Fox rose, then Mr. Burke, with this technical objection to his reference to His Majesty's Ministers.

They were so anxious for the honour of His Majesty's Ministers, these members of His Majesty's Opposition, that they felt bound to stop him. Fanny Burney describes how he refused to suffer their interruption. He declared that he had not once interrupted any of their long speeches against him, and he claimed his right to be heard without a break. They persisted, and then he threw out his arms "in an impassioned but affecting manner," the Diary states, while he called out loudly, "I throw myself upon the protection of your Lordships. . . . If I am punished for what I say I must



insist on being heard!—I call upon you, my Lords, to protect me from this violence!”

Here was a breath of the real thing—a man of action demanding the right to defend himself in his own way—a contrast to the oratorical flourishes of the men of words. It is not surprising that the attempts of the Managers to carry out their policy of irritation were shouted down by the Lords. Lord Chief Justice Kenyon, who represented the Lord Chancellor, said: “Mr. Hastings, proceed!” and consternation prevailed among the orators in the Managers’ box. Doubtless they laid their heads together and once more pretended to come to the conclusion that the Lords had forsworn themselves for the benefit of their enemy, and to abet his villainy.

Nothing more of interest was Miss Burney able to record in connection with the great trial, and it seems that in this respect she was a pretty correct exponent of the opinion of the country on the subject. After eighty days of orations and examinations concerning incidents long past and gone—interminable references to Rajahs and Begums and Ranees and Sahibs and other potentates who had been impotent to withstand the strenuous policy of the man whose genius had raised him from the humblest of positions to the highest, and whose policy had made the annexation of State after State imperative, the proceedings of the trial must have grown intolerably tedious to the public and even to the instigators of the indictment. The oratorical fireworks had become

sodden, though it took five years for the final fizzle to be reached; and long before then Burke had found the French Revolution to afford him a better opportunity for declamation than the impeachment had ever done. His references to the unfortunate Marie Antoinette and the swords that would have leapt from their scabbards to avenge the least slight done to her who was at the mercy of a mob, are better remembered than any of his impassioned phrases about the wrongs of the greatest of the Begums.

But before Fanny Burney had paid her last visit to Westminster Hall, wrapped carefully up by the Queen's instructions—she was fitter for her bed with a nurse by her side—a great deal had happened for her to record. What was the Hastings trial in comparison with the tragic incident that threatened England when it became known that the King was affected by the most terrible malady that can overtake a human being?

It will be seen that Fanny Burney, during these appalling days and nights, showed herself to be as attentive an observer and as graphic an historian of the events in connection with this crisis as she was of some of the phases of the Hastings trial.

But during the months preceding the King's seizure, as well as after his temporary recovery, she proved herself just too competent a narrator of the proceedings at Westminster Hall. The Queen soon discovered her powers in this direction; and not thinking it advisable to attend herself, she got

her Robe-keeper to go in her stead, and, on her return, recount in her presence, and frequently in the presence of the King as well, all that had taken place.

It was rather a strain on Miss Burney, but she did not mind it, since it was the means of bringing her in contact with some of the members of her own family as well as with several of the people with whom she had once been accustomed to associate, the majority of them living on decidedly a higher intellectual plane than either the equerries in attendance on the King or the ladies in attendance on the Queen—not even excepting Elizabeth Juliana Schwellenberg.

Fanny Burney had been present at the Hastings trial before the summer recess, and on July the 12th she set off with their Majesties, three of the Princesses and a remarkably meagre staff of attendants for Cheltenham. The King's health had not been good for some time, and his physicians prescribed a course of the "waters" for him. Bay's Hill Lodge, or Fauconberg Hall, as it is called in the Diary, was the only house in the neighbourhood that would accommodate the Royal party; but if the Royalties were accommodated the Household was incommoded, for never were the members so indifferently housed. The place was indeed quite inadequate to meet the strain put upon it.

"This, ma'am!" cried the Robe-keeper, when the Queen brought her to the room allotted to Her Majesty; "is this little room for your Majesty?"



"Oh, stay till you have seen your own before you call it little!" said the Queen, laughing.

But still, in spite of countless inconveniences, the whole party contrived to lodge in this house for several weeks.

The Diarist found very little worth recording in connection with this visit. So far as she herself was concerned we find the tea-room question coming to the front once more. Where were the suite to have tea together?

They decided to take possession of a small passage for this purpose, but Fanny determined that she would no longer allow the playing of the part of *Présidente* to be among her duties. She would insist on having her afternoons all to herself.

And just when she had made this resolution her servant came to her to say that "Mr. Fairly" (Colonel Digby) wished to speak with her. She saw him and found that he came to beg that he and Lord Courtown might join her tea-table for that evening only; in future they meant to give orders to be served in their own apartments, so as not to obtrude upon the privileges of her retirement.

"The first instance I have met now for two whole years of being understood as to my own retiring inclinations," wrote Fanny, "and it is singular that I should first meet with it from the only person who makes them waver."

She admitted him and Lord Courtown, and in a short time the King entered with Colonel Gwyn and remained for an hour. When all were at last

on the point of leaving, Digby hung back and asked leave to remain a little longer, and although she had plenty to do in the way of unpacking, she granted his request.

But they had scarcely begun their chat when the King returned and seemed surprised to find them together.

"What! only you two!" he cried with a knowing look, and then, after giving some instructions about a letter, strolled away.

"I had rather His Majesty had made such a comment upon any other of his establishment, if make it he must; since I am sure Mr. Fairly's aversion to that species of raillery is equal to my own," she wrote.

But from the number of times that "Mr. Fairly's" name occurs in her records of that visit to Cheltenham it would be difficult to see how such raillery could be avoided. We might venture to indulge in some ourselves at this place, without being guilty of any grossness; for certainly her "Mr. Fairly" was pretty frequently *en évidence* in her tea-room.

But a drearier associate it would have been difficult, we think, for her to find. Mr. Guiffardière, on her return, was guilty of discharging some shafts of raillery against her, hinting at having heard of certain flirtations of hers at Cheltenham; but so far as the equerry was concerned it may be said that his essays in flirtation were of the mildest and most tentative type. At the same time Fanny's record of how agreeable to her were the hours spent in his society must be accepted as sincere, and, as we have already suggested,

these hours may have included some moments of unrecorded tenderness. Had it not been so we must confess we should be unable to understand how she could find Colonel Digby anything beyond the most lugubrious of associates. It must be remembered that the confidences of her Diary-letters had their limits. She did not regard the covers of her Diary as equivalent to the sides of a confessional; and no one had a more delicate sense of what should be recorded and what reserved than herself.

Colonel Digby was a widower of the conscientious type, who was apt to think it right to prolong rather than to curtail his days of mourning; but a critical consideration of Fanny Burney's account of those weeks at Cheltenham, as well as the businesslike way in which she made her subsequent entries respecting his marriage, will, we believe, tend to the impression that he approached very close to the boundary that separates friendship from love. We feel that now and again he was on the verge of winding up some of his moralisings with a proposal—not exactly a definite proposal of marriage, but a proposal that the question of a marriage might be considered as awaiting them at some date in the future. This is really the form that seems most appropriate to the style of cautious converse indulged in—a most virtuous form of indulgence—by this most gentlemanly official.

And Fanny had certainly come to like him greatly. He had most of those qualities which she considered most excellent in a man, and he carried with him the aura of a recent bereavement. They breathed together



an atmosphere of plaintive sentiment, and her yearning to console him may have been quite as strong as his undoubted yearning for consolation from — well, from some sympathetic woman.

Only on such an assumption can we accept her assurances of the happiness she felt in his constant visits to her room. He discussed various questions with her, and they read side by side Combe's *Original Love Letters between a Lady of Quality and a Person of Superior Condition*. He left the second volume with her, and she put it into her workbox. He repeated to her several passages from the *Pleasures of Imagination*, and one day when she was sitting with Miss Planta he asked them if they had ever read Falconer's *Shipwreck*. As neither of them had had that advantage, he sent a servant to his house for the book, and when the man brought it, he laid it beside Fanny, saying he would leave it with her. At this moment Miss Planta thought she would do well to stroll round the house for a little exercise. (This is a very suggestive entry in the Diary : it was plain that Miss Planta had eyes and a sympathetic understanding.) The moment that the Colonel was alone with Fanny he picked up the book, saying, " Shall I read some passages to you ? " She gladly assented, and began to do some plain needlework. In a moment he was deep in the " Palemon and Anna " episode, stopping and sighing when he came to the line—

"He felt the chastity of silent woe."

His sadness quite affected her, she confesses ; and

encouraged by her sympathy he went on. But, alas! the time soon came for her to relinquish the pleasure of listening to him, for she had to go to her room to await the usual toilette summons from the Queen. But he asked her if he should leave the poem with her or—perhaps he might take it with him in case she might have leisure to hear him read the remainder of it the next day. On the whole he thought that he would do well to take it on such a chance; and so they separated.

Now though the account of this reading in the atmosphere that pervades a *solitude à deux* emanating from a poem of sentiment, is rather different from that recorded in deathless verse, when the subject was the story of Lancelot and Guinevere, and the hearts of the readers leapt together in the passionate kiss that was the instinctive sequel to the kiss of passion in the Florentine tome, so that—

“Quel giorno non vi più legemmo avanti,”

sighed the lost soul of the other Fanny—the Francesca of Dante—yet we feel that there is a trace of the aroma of the same spirit of romance about it. But nothing came of *The Shipwreck* more than of *Pleasures of Imagination*. He came again and completed the episode in the former, but that was all.

And yet she could cry, referring to the reading, “How unexpected an indulgence—a luxury I may say, to me, are these evenings now becoming! I have had no regale like this for many and many a grievous long evening.”

He left her at ten o'clock, begging her not to tell any one that he was in the habit of carrying a volume of poems to read to her, for should it be known, he would run the chance of being regarded as a pedant.

She kept his secret ; but even of the sympathy that arises from the sharing of a secret, nothing came. There is talk of a premonition of an attack of gout on the part of the gentleman, and more than a premonition of neuralgia, and the end of the Cheltenham episode from which so much might have been hoped, shows us Fanny recovering from an attack of influenza and the equerry limping off with a swollen face.

He would have made a "mighty pair" Paolo.





**A REIGN OF TERROR**





## CHAPTER XXVII

### A REIGN OF TERROR

“**M**ELANCHOLY—most melancholy—was the return to Windsor,” wrote Miss Burney. She had had pleasant days in that small house at Cheltenham. There had been the liveliness of theatre-going, which she describes most delightfully—the liveliness of Mr. Bunbury, who came with the Duke of York to talk of theatre people to his heart’s content—the liveliness of new faces about her. The paternal affection of the King for his favourite son caused him actually to get a house built for his accommodation against one of the walls of Fauconberg Hall. It was of wood, and it was made in Cheltenham and brought out bit by bit to its site, the task occupying twenty or thirty men a fortnight. The filial affection of the Prince enabled him to remain exactly one night under its roof. They all went to the theatre together. It may be mentioned incidentally that Mrs. Jordan was the “star.”

All these delights—“ease, leisure, elegant society, and interesting communications”—were to be exchanged for “arrogant manners, contentious disputation, and arbitrary ignorance.” Mrs. Schwellenberg met her with all these qualities in addition to the customary

Schwollenberg vulgarity. The usual dull routine of bickerings and birthdays and weekly flittings from the barrenness of Windsor to the dullness of Kew began, and then came an episode so terrific in its import that all minor matters were neglected while it lasted.

It was on October 17, 1788, that the first whisper of the King's malady was heard. The Royal Family were in residence at Kew, and their return to Windsor had to be postponed. His Majesty's health had not been good for some time, Miss Burney wrote, but there was nothing to be alarmed about, though there was some uncertainty as to his complaint—perhaps she had heard a rumour that disconcerted her—perhaps she had heard sounds coming through a half-open door that gave her a shock. She was, however, discreet. "Heaven preserve him!" she whispers, when she hears that there is a further postponement of the return. This was on the Saturday. On the Monday she makes the entry that the King had been ill during the night, and everybody was terribly frightened; "but it went off and, thank Heaven! he is now better!"

At the end of the week he was reported to be so much better that the journey to Windsor took place. But on this Saturday he met Fanny and spoke to her "with a manner so uncommon that a high fever could alone account for it; a rapidity, a hoarseness of voice, a volubility, an earnestness—a vehemence rather—it startled me inexpressibly. . . . Heaven—Heaven preserve him! The Queen grows more and

more uneasy. She alarms me sometimes for myself, at other times she has a sedateness that wonders me still more."

This is the beginning of a record which naturally surpasses in importance any that she had reason to make during her residence at Court. It is so interesting in every line that we do not pause to wonder how much took place under her eyes that she did not think her duty to the Queen permitted of her committing to paper. We recognise the debt that is due to her for a narrative of the approach of a shadow that threatened to darken not only the Palace but the whole of England as well, written with matchless skill—a narrative told with simplicity, sincerity, and a graphic power that was at the command of no other English writer of the period.

All unconsciously she contrives from the first to arouse our interest, hinting at the mysteriousness of the malady. She tells how the King met her again on the Sunday. He had been prevailed on not to go as usual to early chapel, and we see him wandering solitary about the passages. We seem to see the attendants standing back in their rooms, whispering as he passes, opening the doors silently and looking furtively after him. Suddenly Fanny came upon him when in the act of leaving the Queen's room. He stopped her and stood telling her about his health for nearly half an hour, speaking with extraordinary rapidity and not pausing for a second. There is nothing the matter with him, he assures her—and that is the most terrifying part of it all—



nothing, only that he cannot sleep a minute all night. He is in great agitation on this account, but he makes gracious references to everybody and is deliriously uneasy lest he should give trouble; and so he walks on, leaving her in the certainty that he is in the throes of a high fever.

And in the Queen's Lodge no one speaks of the illness. It is understood that the subject is to be ignored.

A few days later and she has to record that the King is gaining ground, and that consequently the Queen is easier in her mind. But before many days are over he has become so weak that he walks like a gouty man, yet he has talked away without the cessation of a moment and he is thus terribly hoarse. "God send him better!" she cries. When she goes to the Queen she finds her reading one of Hunter's sacred *Lectures*. It seems to be a relief to her to read it out to her Robe-keeper. But at some pathetic passages she is moved to tears and is ashamed of her weakness. "How nervous I am!" she cried. "I am quite a fool! Don't you think so?"

"'No, ma'am,' was all I dared answer," writes Fanny.

The King was out hunting at this time—an enormous responsibility the poor equerries must have felt in looking after him—and when he returned he went to the Queen's dressing-room to take his bark—he was apparently being treated for fever by Dr. Baker, who considered the old-fashioned bark to be a better febrifuge than James's Powders, though the

Royal Family had faith in the latter. He was in the Queen's room with Lady Effingham, when he remarked, "My dear Effy, you see me all at once an old man!"

"We must all grow old, sir! I am sure I do," replied the tactful Duchess.

But His Majesty did not mind. He swallowed his draught, and looking toward the Queen, said, "She is my physician, and no man need have a better; she is my *friend*, and no man *can* have a better!"

Very touching indeed is this and every other entry in her Diary relating to the approach of the crisis. Whenever Fanny has a chance of seeing the King he is talking—talking—talking. But his condition varies for some time. One day he seems much better, the next he is worse than ever, and Dr. Heberden is called in. After the lapse of some days the Prince of Wales arrives from Brighton. Gradually, very gradually, the horror approaches; and nothing that she had ever done in fiction equals in effect the simple record of all that Fanny Burney noticed from day to day. Most touching of all her entries are those relating to the Queen. "The Queen," she writes, "is almost overpowered with some secret terror. I am affected beyond all expression in her presence to see what struggles she makes to support her serenity. To-day she gave up the conflict when I was alone with her, and burst into a violent fit of tears. It was very, very terrible to see! . . . something horrible seemed impending . . . I was still wholly unsuspecting of the greatness of the cause she had for

dread. Illness, a breaking up of the constitution, the payment of sudden infirmity and premature old age for the waste of unguarded health and strength—these seemed to me the threats awaiting her; and great and grievous enough, yet how short of the fact!”

At last the terrible truth was revealed. Miss Burney sat dining with Miss Planta, but there was little conversation between them. It was clear that both had their suspicions of the nature of the dread shadow that was hovering over the Castle. They remained together, waiting for the worst. “A stillness the most uncommon reigned over the whole house. Nobody stirred; not a voice was heard; not a motion. I could do nothing but watch, not knowing for what; there seemed a strangeness in the house most extraordinary.”

To talk of such passages as these as examples of literary art would be ridiculous. They are transcripts from life itself, made by some one with a genius for observation, not merely for recording. Fanny Burney had the artist's instinct for collecting only such incidents as heighten the effect.

When she is still sitting in the dim silence of that November evening with her friend, some one enters to whisper that there is to be no playing of the after-dinner music in which the King usually took so much pleasure. Later the equerries come slowly into the room. There is more whispering—more head-shaking. What was it all about? Had anything happened? What had happened? No one wishes to be the first to speak. But the suspense! The



strain upon the nerves of the two ladies! At last it can be borne no longer. The dreadful revelation is made. The King is demented.

She heard the whole story from Colonel Digby. At dinner, the Prince of Wales being present, His Majesty had broken forth into positive delirium, and the Queen was so overpowered as to fall into violent hysterics. All the Princesses were in misery, and the Prince of Wales had burst into tears. (Years afterward he declared that the King had attacked and almost throttled him.) No one knew what was to follow—no one could conjecture the event. Nothing could be more pathetic than the concern of the King for his wife. His delusion was that she was the sufferer. When Fanny Burney went to her own room, where she was accustomed to await her nightly summons to attend Her Majesty, she remained there alone for two hours. At midnight she can stand the suspense no longer. She opens the door and listens in the passage. Not a sound is to be heard. Not even a servant crossed the stairs on the corridor off which her apartment opened. After another hour's suspense a page knocks at her door with the message that she is to go at once to her Royal mistress.

"My poor Royal mistress!" she writes. "Never can I forget her countenance—pale, ghastly pale she looked . . . her whole frame was disordered, yet she was still and quiet. And the poor King is dreadfully uneasy about her. Nothing was the matter with himself, he affirmed, except nervousness on her account.

He insisted on having a bed made up for himself in her dressing-room in order that he might be at hand should she become worse during the night." He had given orders that Miss Goldsworthy was to remain with her; but it seemed that he had no great confidence in the vigilance of any one but himself, for some hours after the Queen had retired, he appeared at the door before the eyes of the horrified lady-in-waiting, bearing a lighted candle. He opened the bed curtains and satisfied himself that his dread of the Queen's being carried out of the place was unfounded; but he did not leave the room for another half-hour, and "the terror of the scene completely overwhelmed the unhappy lady."

Truly, when this terror was walking by night Fanny Burney's stipend was well earned.

Not until November the 13th was there any sign of improvement in the King's condition. The Prince of Wales remained at the Castle. He had apparently taken upon himself the arranging of everything, and this meant a good deal of derangement. People were turned out of their rooms in the Queen's Lodge, and orders were given to the porter that only certain persons were to be permitted to cross the threshold. The favourite tea-room was assigned to the physicians, and the general confusion of the Household became worse confounded. Colonel Digby, who had succeeded in controlling the King one night when every one else had shrunk from the attempt, was sent by the Queen to the Archbishop of Canterbury to order

a special prayer to be made on behalf of the monarch.

But the promise of amendment was not realised. On the 16th the King was worse. He had passed a shocking night and the most dangerous symptoms had manifested themselves. "Oh, good heavens! what a day did this prove," wrote Fanny. "I saw not a human face save at dinner; and then, what faces! gloom and despair in all!"

Three days later Sir Lucas Pepys, who had frequently met Fanny at the Thrales', was called in, and she sent a message to him begging him to come to her. He complied, and was able to give her a most hopeful prognosis. The King would most certainly recover, he affirmed. The process might be long and tedious, but he spoke with absolute confidence as to its termination. He reiterated his opinion even when there were repeated changes for the worse, and his optimism must have been a source of consolation to his colleagues as well as to Miss Burney and the Queen, for he told Fanny that all the physicians received threatening letters daily, "to answer for the safety of the monarch with their lives," so high ran the tide of loyal affection throughout the country. A mob had already stopped the carriage of Sir George Baker, and he was asked to give an account of the King. When he said that he could only give a bad one, they furiously exclaimed "The more shame to you!" This was the attitude of the mob in England on the eve of the Revolution in France,



when the King and Queen were dragged to the guillotine by their own subjects!

Who was accountable for the determination to move the sufferer to Kew does not appear. But before this step could be taken a Privy Council had to be held and the Queen's sanction given to it. Knowing as she did how greatly the King detested Kew, she was reluctant at first to withdraw her opposition to the scheme, but apparently the advantages of the gardens at Kew, where His Majesty might take exercise in perfect privacy, were pointed out to her, and the removal was decided on.

Graphic indeed is the account given in the Diary of the flight to Kew. It seemed to be nobody's business to make any preparation for the reception of the Queen and her entourage. The rooms were dirty and unwarmed and the corridors were freezing. And to the horrors of this damp, unsavoury barracks was added Mrs. Schwellenberg. The odious creature is "so oppressed between her spasms and the house's horrors, that the oppression she inflicted ought perhaps to be pardoned. It was, however, difficult enough to bear," Fanny adds. "Harshness, tyranny, dissension, and even insult seemed personified. I cut short the details upon this subject—they would but make you sick."

Truly little Miss Burney earned her wages at this time. The dilapidated palace was only rendered habitable by the importation by the thoughtful Colonel Digby of a cartload of sandbags, which

were as strategically distributed for the exclusion of the draughts as if they had been the usual defensive supply of a siege. But even this ingenious device failed to neutralise the Arctic rigours of the place. The providing of carpets for some of the bare floors of the bedrooms and passages was a startling innovation; but eventually it was carried out. An occasional set of curtains was also smuggled into this frozen fairy palace, and a sofa came now and again. But in spite of all these auxiliaries to luxury—in spite, too, of Mrs. Schwellenberg's having locked herself into her room, forbidding any one to disturb her—the dreariness and desolation of the December at Kew must have caused Miss Burney to think with longing of her father's home in St. Martin's Street and of the congenial atmosphere which she breathed during her numerous visits to the Thrales' solid mansion at Streatham.

But during the first days of December a step was taken which should have been taken a month earlier, when the first symptoms of the King's malady had become apparent. An expert in mental diseases was called in; and with the change of treatment, an improvement in his condition was at once shown. Dr. Francis Willis was the "specialist," as we should call him. He was well equipped for his duty. He could not have asked to be excused from undertaking it on the plea that was so eloquently advanced by an earlier practitioner in an appeal made by a monarch to "minister to a mind diseased"—that some cases need "more the divine than the physician," for he

was himself in Holy Orders, being Rector of St. John's, Wapping. He had a private asylum in Lincolnshire, where he was assisted by his son, John. Both father and son were summoned to Kew, where they created a good impression upon every one with whom they came in contact. Digby described them to Fanny as "fine, lively, natural, independent characters"; and on her becoming acquainted with them herself she was greatly impressed by them. The father she considered "a man of ten thousand; open, honest, dauntless, lighthearted, innocent, and high-minded." The son she thought "extremely handsome," inheriting "in a middle degree" all the excellent qualities of his father; but he was not, she thought, of an equally sanguine temperament. "The manners of both are extremely pleasing and they both proceed completely their own way, not merely unacquainted with Court etiquette, but wholly, and most artlessly, unambitious to form any such acquaintance."

Such were the admirable father and son whose presence by the side of the King was made the subject of more of Burke's rhetoric. Their appointment was actually referred to as a gross piece of impiety, suggesting, as it did, a wicked rebellion against the decree of the Almighty, who, according to Burke, had "hurled the monarch from his throne."

It would seem as if Burke thought that the *Court Register* was the official guide recognised by the Power to Whom he referred, and Who would resent



as a personal affront any attempt to effect a cure of the King except through the legitimate channel of a Court physician. A party politician cannot as a rule be accepted as a trustworthy interpreter of the decrees of Providence. Burke's aim at the moment was only to bring discredit upon Pitt and the Ministry, and embarrass them as much as possible, and as it has always been regarded the constitutional privilege of the Opposition to discredit the Government, his pronouncements on Pitt and Providence should not have been taken too seriously. They probably were not.

What Fanny Burney felt much more deeply than Burke's ranting was the cruel slander that was circulated to the effect that the Queen was in some way responsible for the crisis that had come about in regard to the establishment of a Regency. "My poor mistress now droops," she wrote. "I grieve—grieve to see her! But her own name and conduct called in question! Who can wonder she is shocked and shaken?"

Variable are the accounts from day to day of the King's condition during the last days of December, 1788; and between the 7th and 13th of January, 1789, all the doctors have been examined by the Regency Committee. Toward the close of the month, however, the bulletins are distinctly more favourable, and so cheering an effect have they that Fanny draws up one on her own account in reply to a letter from Mr. Smelt, who was going to London. Young Dr. Willis, entering into the spirit of her

design, put his name to the document, which she witnessed.

But Miss Burney's cheerfulness does not last long. Every day she is subjected to the insults of Mrs. Schwellenberg, and not only insults, but elaborate acts of cruelty as well, and these, with the strain that is put on her, are becoming too much for her. Sir Lucas Pepys declared one day that the confinement in the palace—that phrase was suffered to embrace everything—was menacing her health, and insisted on her taking exercise. Colonel Greville, who was present, at once offered her a key to a door opening into Richmond Gardens, close to the Lodge, and here she has an hour's walk on January the 27th—the first promenade she has had since the middle of October.

It was owing to the courtesy of the equerry that she met with an adventure which she said occasioned her "the severest personal terror" which she had ever experienced in her life.

Her account of this adventure forms one of the most interesting chapters of her Diary.

**A REMARKABLE INTERVIEW**





## CHAPTER XXVIII

### A REMARKABLE INTERVIEW

IT happened on the morning of February 2, 1789, when, learning from the younger of the Willises that she might with safety walk in Kew Gardens, as the King was going to Richmond Gardens, she made her way into the former, and had almost strolled the whole way round when she saw among the trees some figures whom she took to be workmen or the usual gardeners; but looking more closely when they came into the open ground, she believed that she detected in one of them the figure of the King. "Alarmed past all possible expression, I waited not to know more," she wrote, "but turning back, ran off with all my might. But what was my terror to hear myself pursued—to hear the voice of the King himself loudly and hoarsely calling after me: 'Miss Burney! Miss Burney!'"

She declares that she was ready to die, for, not knowing what state he might be in at that moment, and being aware of the general orders that no one was to be in the way of the King at any time, she thought that the very act of her running away might be hurtful to him. She was, however, too terrified to stop, but kept looking out for some by-

path by which she could make good her escape. She was not successful. She heard the steps behind her and the hoarse voice of the King calling out her name, while the attendants were tearing after him, the Willises loudly exhorting him not to exert himself so unmercifully. But their words were unheeded by him. On still she went till her feet were "not sensible that they even touched the ground"; and even though she heard other voices calling her to stop, she found it impossible to do so, until one of the party overtook her and said that Dr. Willis begged her to stand, because it was hurtful to the King to run.

"Then, indeed, I stopped in a state of fear really amounting to agony," she wrote. "I turned round and saw the two Doctors had got the King between them and three attendants of Dr. Willis's were hovering about. They all slackened their pace as they saw me stand still, but such was the excess of my alarm, that I was wholly insensible to the effects of a race which, at any other time, would have required an hour's recruit."

With admirable presence of mind she thought that it might appease the anger of the King at her flight if she were to show confidence in his goodwill, so she faced the approaching party, only whispering to the foremost attendant to remain by her side; and when within a yard or two of her the King called out, "Why did you run away, Miss Burney?" This was a question which required a diplomatic reply, but before she could frame one,



he had enwound her in his paternal arms and kissed her heartily on the cheek, greatly to her confusion and horror. The two doctors stood placidly by. They, being quite unaccustomed to the ways of the Court of George III.—though they had doubtless heard something of the practices that prevailed at the Courts of His Majesty's lamented grandfather and great-grandfather—seemed under the impression that there was nothing unusual in this form of salutation. For all they knew it might be regarded as *de rigueur* between a monarch and the ladies of his consort's retinue. Even Dr. Willis, the divine, took a tolerant view of the transaction. He, as Miss Burney afterward recorded, actually looked pleased!

But of course the prim little lady herself was overwhelmed—yes, at first; but soon her good sense came to her rescue. She seems to have come with extraordinary rapidity to the conclusion that the King was not so mad as she had believed him to be. Her train of reasoning was instinctive, and therefore correct: the King had put his arms about her and kissed her when he had the chance, therefore he could not be so mad after all.

In truth, however, Fanny Burney took the view of her treatment that any sensible modest young woman would take of it. She knew that the King, who had been separated for several months from the people whom he had been daily in the habit of meeting, had shown in the most natural way possible his delight at coming once more in contact with one of them.

And undoubtedly the homely old gentleman was delighted beyond measure to meet with some one belonging to his happy years; though it is not conceivable that the King would have kissed Mrs. Schwollenberg if he had come upon her suddenly as he had upon Miss Burney. People prefer silver rather than iron links with a happy past. He was so overjoyed that the divine and the physician in attendance soon became anxious. They could not know much of all that he talked about to Miss Burney. They were in the position of strangers suddenly introduced to a family circle, and understanding nothing of the little homely secrets—homely topics—upon which all the members of the circle have laughed together for years. They possibly could not see much sense in his long and rambling chat—it must have been largely in monologue—but they must have observed the face of the lady who was listening to him, and known from the expression which it wore that their patient was making himself intelligible. Only now and again they thought it prudent to check his exuberance. They must have been the most intelligent of men; and their names deserve to stand high in the annals of their country.

They remained for some time after the King had greeted Miss Burney; and when he began to speak to her of topics that had a purely domestic ring, they showed their good taste, as well as their knowledge of the peculiarities of their “case,” by moving to a little distance, signalling to their attendants to

do the same. Their discrimination must have been highly appreciated by the King. The poor restless mind had long wanted such a good long talk with a sympathetic listener, who, he knew, could understand every allusion that he might make to the past. He yearned to talk and to hear of such things as some one living in a distant land looks forward to finding in a letter from home. The *res angusta domi*—that was what he was hungering for—the trivial things in which he delighted—the confidences on simple matters—the sly everyday jests, never acutely pointed even to the family circle, but absolutely pointless to every one outside, yet sounding so delightfully witty when repeated as a sign of a happy intimacy of the past!

Though Miss Burney was greatly terrified by his affectionate salutation, she could not but have been surprised at the sanity displayed in the monologue that followed; for one of the first of his innumerable questions revealed to her the fact that he was perfectly well aware of what a trial to her patience was the odious Mrs. Schwellenberg. He asked how she was getting on with Mrs. Schwellenberg, and he did so with a laugh that showed her how well he appreciated her difficulties in this direction in the past. Before she could say a word he was making light of the Schwellenberg—adopting exactly the strain that he knew would be most effective with Miss Burney.

“Never mind her—never mind her! Don’t be oppressed! I am your friend! Don’t let her cast



you down—I know that you have a hard time of it—but don't mind her!"

The advice and the tone in which it was given—with a pleasant laugh—did not seem very consistent with what she had expected from a madman. Fanny Burney appears up to that moment to have been under the impression that the King and Queen had known nothing of the tyranny and insults to which she had been subjected by Mrs. Schwellenberg. But now it was made plain to her that the eyes of the Royal couple had been open all the time. (She seems to have forgotten what the King said to her on the subject, for more than a year later she expressed the belief that the Queen knew nothing of Mrs. Schwellenberg's tyranny.)

But how much more surprised must she have been when the King went on to talk to her in the most cordially confidential way about her father! It must have been another revelation to her when he showed how fully he realised the ambitions of Dr. Burney. He asked her regarding the progress of the *History of Music*, and this gave him the chance of getting upon his favourite topic, the music of Handel. But when he began to illustrate some of his impressions on this fruitful theme by singing over the choruses of an oratorio or two—perhaps such trifles as "All we like Sheep," or "Lift up your Heads," or the "Hallelujah"—he must have gone far toward neutralising the good opinion she had formed as to his sanity. Fortunately the attendant doctors interposed at this point; but the fact that the distinguished

amateur suffered their adverse criticism proves to posterity that the King was even more good-natured than he had been painted by Miss Burney.

On, then, he went to talk of the subject which must never have been far from Dr. Burney's heart—the mastership of the King's Band: “Your father ought to have had that post, and not that little poor musician Parsons, who was not fit for it,” he cried. “But Lord Salisbury used your father very ill in that business, and so he did me! However, I have dashed out his name, and I shall put your father's in—as soon as I get loose again. What has your father got at last? Nothing but that poor thing at Chelsea! Oh, fie! fie! But never mind! I will take care of him—I will do it myself!”

Could he have given the devoted daughter of Dr. Burney a more emphatic proof of his complete recovery to sanity than this? Why, it would have convinced Dr. Burney himself!

But the King did not confine his conversation to the one topic which he knew was of the greatest interest to her. He spoke of Mrs. Delany, who had been the means of introducing Fanny to the Royal circle; and he referred to the ill-treatment that he had received at the hands of one of his pages; but this was the only passage that savoured of unkindness, and the chronicler is unable to do more than hope that the conduct of the page was one of His Majesty's delusions. Then, with what seems to us to be consummate adroitness, he put some questions to her which she could not but answer. “They referred to

information given to him in his illness from various motives, but which he suspected to be false, and which I knew he had reason to suspect," Miss Burney writes. "Yet was it most dangerous to set anything right, as I was not aware what might be the views of their having been stated wrong. I was as discreet as I knew how to be, and I hope I did no mischief; but this was the worst part of the dialogue."

We can quite believe that it was; and considering that it was the part of the dialogue which was most interesting to the King, we think that Miss Burney was to be congratulated upon the tact she displayed in her answers. She did not cause the King to be more perturbed than he was when waxing indignant over the conduct of his page; and there was no need for Dr. Willis to interfere at this point, though he did so a little later. Then, submitting with the utmost docility to the control of his excellent physician, and with another exhortation not to pay any attention to the whims of the Schwellenberg, the gracious gentleman kissed her once more upon the cheek and allowed her to take her departure.

So ended this remarkable adventure in Kew Gardens. One can picture Fanny Burney flying to tell the Queen all that had occurred—to repeat everything that her discretion permitted her of the conversation, and one has no difficulty in imagining the effect upon Queen Charlotte of all that she narrated; but it seems rather hard that from Mrs. Schwellenberg should be withheld the excellent advice



given by the King to Miss Burney respecting the German virago.

It would have been impossible either for Fanny Burney or the Queen to come to any conclusion from all that happened except one that was entirely satisfactory to both of them. King George III. was undoubtedly on the high road to recovery, and subsequent events confirmed this opinion. It really seemed that the interview with the author of *Evelina* marked the turning-point in his malady at this time. Every day brought its record of improvement, and within a fortnight the dreaded Regency Bill, which had been sent up to the Lords, was abandoned.

Before the end of the month the King and Queen were seen walking together through the gardens, and subsequently Fanny came upon His Majesty in the Queen's dressing-room. On opening the door she gave a start to find herself face to face with him. But he reassured her, saying that he had waited to see her, adding, "I am quite well now—I was nearly so when I saw you before—but I could overtake you better now."

On March 1st there were public thanksgivings in all the churches, followed by such an illumination of London as had not been seen since the Great Fire. The scene at Kew is admirably described by Miss Burney, who had written some congratulatory lines to be offered by the Princess Amelia to the King. A great "transparency" had been painted by the Queen's order, representing the King, Providence, Health, and Britannia—a truly British tableau—and

when this was hung out and illuminated, the little Princess "went to lead her papa to the front window."

Then she dropped on her knees and gave him the "copy of verses," with the postscript :

"The little bearer begs a kiss  
From dear papa for bringing this."

The "dear papa" took his dear child in his arms and held her close to him for some time. Nothing could have been more charmingly natural or affecting. For such a picture of Royalty at home we are indebted to Fanny Burney.

The next morning the King received in person the address of the Lords and Commons congratulating him on his recovery, and at night the Queen sent for Fanny Burney to come to her in the drawing-room, and there told her she might have a holiday of practically two whole days!

She was quite ready for so gracious a token of favour.

## EXCURSIONS AND ALARUMS





## CHAPTER XXIX

### EXCURSIONS AND ALARUMS

THE celebrations and the festivities and the thanksgivings for the King's recovery were innumerable, and when it was thought advisable that His Majesty should have a change of air—possibly the good physicians were thinking of the Royal Household as well—the South Coast was considered the one most likely to be of advantage to him. If his affectionate son, George, Prince of Wales, suggested placing at his disposal his beautiful Oriental lath and plaster villa at Brighton as a convalescent home for His Majesty, there may have been some good reason why his offer was not accepted, and Weymouth chosen for the Royal visit.

The journey to Dorsetshire was one of the most interesting of Royal progresses, and Fanny Burney, who certainly stood in great need of a change, gives a light-hearted account of the trip, which took place in June, through Winchester, Lyndhurst, the New Forest, and Salisbury. Everywhere the sounds of rejoicing filled the air, and on the Sunday Fanny is rather shocked to hear in the parish church of Lyndhurst the National Anthem sung in place of a psalm. "But, misplaced as this was in a church, its

intent was so kind, loyal, and affectionate, that I believe there was not a dry eye amongst either singers or hearers," she wrote. She herself was greatly affected.

Weymouth was illuminated from end to end, and every man, woman, and child wore some token of loyalty. The very bathing women and the boatmen adorned themselves in this way, and when the King took his morning dip, a machine followed the King's, carrying a stringed band, who struck up "God Save the King" the moment he took his plunge. We are inclined to think His Majesty kept his ears under water as long as he could.

In spite of the exuberant loyalty of the town, however, when the Mayor and burgesses came with their address to the King they asked leave to kiss hands, and their request being graciously granted, the Mayor advanced to the Queen and took her hand naturally and in the ordinary way of salutation.

"You must kneel, sir," whispered Colonel Gwyn; but the Mayor paid no attention to the command, but kissed the Queen's hand standing erect. Passing Gwyn on his way out, the equerry said severely:

"You should have knelt, sir."

"Sir," said the Mayor, "I cannot."

"Everybody does, sir," said the equerry.

"Sir, I have a wooden leg!" was the explanation.

And the funny part of the matter was that all the members of the deputation seemed to be afflicted



in the same way, for they all kept to the attitude adopted perforce by their chief magistrate, and not a knee touched the floor!

At Weymouth they came upon Mrs. Siddons walking upon the sands with her little girl, and Fanny, with the true artist's enterprise, was very anxious to try if the stately lady would unbend, as she was discovered in the midst of such simple surroundings, or remain as rigid as the Mayor. There was not, however, sufficient time for the experiment to be perfected.

Several times the Royal party went to the theatre and witnessed some poor plays indifferently performed. But Fanny devotes a good deal of space to describing them, and yet confines herself to a single line when noting that Miss Planta's brother had just arrived from France, "where all is confusion, commotion, and impending revolution!"

It might have been expected that an appeal would be made to her artistic sense by the contrast shown between the two countries just at that time. England was aflame from East to West with bonfires to celebrate the recovery of the King; but of a different sentiment were the flames symbolic that spread through unhappy France. But only twice or three times does the Diarist make any reference to the Revolution, and not once does she allude to any exchange of views between herself and the confiding Queen on this supreme event of modern European history.

Before leaving Weymouth Mrs. Siddons was

persuaded to appear as Rosalind, and the criticism was exactly what one would expect. "She looked beautifully," Fanny writes, "but too large for that shepherd's dress; and her gaiety sits not natural upon her—it seems more like disguised gravity. I must own my admiration for her is confined to her tragic powers; and there it is raised so high, that I feel mortified in a degree to see her so much fainter attempts and success in comedy."

The phrase "disguised gravity" strikes us as being one of the happiest ever applied to the lighter moments of a tragedy queen.

Upon another occasion the Royal party set off for Lulworth Castle, the Dorset seat of the great Catholic family of Weld. Their London house was originally in Great Wild Street—a corruption of Weld Street. Mrs. Siddons was to play the part of Lady Townly in *The Provok'd Husband*; but owing to contrary winds, the Royal party, who had gone along the coast by sea, did not arrive at the theatre until the hour must have been past eleven. The audience had been waiting for five or six hours, and yet they had enough spirit remaining to shake the theatre with their applause when the Royal boxes were at last filled.

The King and Queen had a distant sort of family interest in Lulworth Castle, for Mrs. Fitz Herbert's first marriage essay had been with Mr. Edward Weld, of Lulworth Castle. At the time of their visit, the Prince of Wales had been married to her for nearly four years.



Mrs. Siddons.

*From the bust by Sir Thomas Baskett, R.A.*





August the 12th was the birthday of the Prince of Wales. They might have postponed their visit to Lulworth till this interesting anniversary; but they did not, and Fanny says laconically, but meaningly, that this birthday "was not kept."

A Western tour to Exeter brought the Royal party to Saltram, which accommodated in magnificent fashion all the members of the Royal suite, down to the humblest footman. They returned to Weymouth on August the 28th, and on September the 14th set out for Windsor, via Longleat, the seat of the Marquis of Bath, where they remained for a day and two nights, and Tottenham Park, the seat of Lord Ailesbury. On the 18th they were back at Windsor.

The only episode of interest not already referred to, in the Diary for the rest of the year, is the state visit to the theatre. Once again the enthusiasm of the people was embarrassing to the Royal party. For more than an hour Fanny Burney and her companions were struggling to reach the doors, and afterward upon the staircase, before they managed to get to a box—not the one that had been reserved for them, but quite another. By this *contretemps* they had the good fortune, however, to miss a considerable part of O'Keefe's farce, *The Dramatist*. The greater number of the entries in the Diary for this year are of the most commonplace description, and no more interesting to readers of to-day than a family letter written in England to-day would be to a native of the Falkland Islands next year. To

be sure there is brightness and a certain keenness of observation in many of the scattered paragraphs, but having already referred to her account of the days which she spent during this year at the Hastings Trial, there is no need to touch except in the briefest way upon the incidents of the last year of what she appropriately termed her monastic life.

The first impression of which we are conscious on reading the Diary for the years 1790 and 1791 up to the time of her severing her connection with the Court, is that the writer was in very bad health—such very bad health as caused her to be indifferent to it—indifferent to everything that was happening or that might happen. The efforts that she made to be sprightly in her correspondence can best be described by her own phrase—"gravity disguised"; we do not hear a word bearing directly upon her condition; but her condition is apparent. The monotony of her life is killing her, and the brutality of the hag with whom she had to associate almost hourly is hastening the process. Her position is like that of some one who is dying of a slow poison, and to whom a bludgeoning is administered every day. Either of the two was sufficiently potent to end her; but the combination meant acceleration. We feel that if she had not succeeded in making her escape when she did, she would not have survived another half year.

And perhaps we may be justified in expressing the opinion that she would not have held up so long if it had not been for the cordiality of her



relations with Colonel Digby. It seems to us to be quite plain that she greatly liked this person from the first, and we repeat that his attitude toward her was enough to suggest that he had more than an ordinary regard for her. He could not, of course, do more than ask her to mourn with him during the year that followed the death of his wife; but he certainly did so in a very marked way; she responded to his call, not without tenderness, and every one knows how powerful a bond may be woven between a disconsolate widower and a marriageable young woman—but not too young—to whom he appeals for sympathy, and not in vain.

Her guarded entries in her Diary on the subject of Digby and his affairs—her accounts of his sudden appearances at her door—of his long lingerings in her sitting-room during the illness of the King—all tend to convey the impression that if she told a good deal about Digby she kept back a good deal. We feel that we should like to read the diary of some one who had the *entrée* to the tea-room at this time—say, Miss Planta—in respect of Colonel Digby and Miss Burney. As it is, however, all that can confidently be said on the subject of his attitude is that he rather more than hinted to her that he thought he might go a long way before he could find a woman who would make him a better wife than she would be.

Fanny Burney is guarded, and, moreover, at times she wears an impenetrable mask of frankness, in reference to Colonel Digby and his conferences with herself; but we think she discloses enough to

suggest that the people about them, from the King down to Mrs. Schwellenberg, thought that—well, that “something would come of it”; and if they did not express the opinion that he was “shilly-shallying” with her, we have some grounds for doing so in this place.

He was an unsatisfactory sort of person, but he was the only possible *parti* for Fanny Burney within a conversational distance, and her monastic life had not reconciled her to monastic conditions of living, so—every one who studies the Diary closely is at liberty to form an opinion as to whether or not her regard for him ever reached such a point as would have caused her to accept him had he proposed to her, or even to form an opinion as to whether or not he did actually propose to her and was rejected.

But we certainly cannot refrain from expressing our belief that the apparently sudden marriage of Colonel Digby with Miss Gunning and the secrecy which he observed on the subject in conversation with Miss Burney—he sounded her once in reference to the gossip that associated his name with that of Miss Gunning and assured her that the rumour about them was only gossip—contributed largely to the dissatisfaction that Fanny Burney felt in her “place,” and this dissatisfaction added in no small measure to her ill-health.

Several times in the course of the year 1790–1 we hear of her illnesses, and though she expresses her gratitude to the Queen and the Princesses, who were very attentive to her when she was obliged to take to

her bed, we feel that if they had but shown this regard for her in a practical way, she would have had greater reason to thank them. If, for instance, the Queen had demanded of her an explanation of how her eyes had become so inflamed on that day of the terrible journey to London, some good might have come of it. Mrs. Haggerdorn's eyes had gone the same way and she had become almost blind. Why did the Queen not investigate the cause of such trouble to both her Junior Robe-keepers?

In May, 1789, she had a frightful attack of neuralgia—the result, of course, of all that she had gone through—of a service that admitted of no respite. The opinion of the eminent physician, Sir Lucas Pepys, on her condition at the close of the King's illness is known; and from that date until the end of the next year she was never in good health. Every one who saw her at that time, having known her in the old days, was shocked at the change in her. "Let me give to my beloved friends some account of the conclusion of this year while yet in being," she writes; and then she goes on to tell how her ill-health was the talk of every one—every one except Mrs. Schwellenberg and the Queen. The former insisted on her playing piquet every night, though her frequent pains forced her to retire to her room more than once in every game for restoratives. "So weak and faint I was become that I was compelled to put my head out into the air at all hours, and in all weathers, from time to time, to recover the power of breathing, which seemed not



seldom wholly withdrawn," she wrote. "The whole household showed compassion and regard, and a general opinion that I was falling into a decline ran through the establishment."

Lady Elizabeth Waldegrave joined with her friends in begging her to ask for a respite from her duties. Miss Gomme, Mr. de Luc, and Mr. Guiffardière were even more emphatic in the same direction, the last-named telling her that she must resign forthwith.

At last even the Queen came to believe that she was not in robust health, and was even gracious enough, not to tell her to go to bed and then give orders for Sir George Baker to be summoned to attend to her, but only gracious enough to inquire now and again what Mr. Francis, to whom she had, through her sister, communicated her symptoms, thought of the case.

It seems just possible that some one may have hinted to the gracious lady that the Schwellenberg was killing Miss Burney, and that the gracious lady had an idea that, by turning Miss Burney into a "reader," her services might be retained without forcing her to submit to the tyranny of the tea-room; for one evening in March, 1790, when in the dressing-room, Her Majesty said:—

"Prepare yourself, Miss Burney, with all your spirits, for to-night you must be reader."

How Miss Burney prepared herself is not revealed, but the reading came off, the Queen having chosen Colman's *Polly Honeycombe* as the trial piece. It

tried more than Fanny Burney's skill as a reader, for two of the Princesses were present, and some of the scenes were too coarse to be described, so that she was compelled to exercise a line-to-line and word-to-word judgment as she went on with her task. The result was, she thought, rather flat, especially as no one was permitted to make a comment even at the end. The next night *The English Merchant* was chosen for her, and the Duke of Clarence was present, and this being "an elegant and serious piece," she read it with much greater ease.

This incident may perhaps suggest that the Queen had a hope of changing the form of Miss Burney's service; but if so her hope was not realised, and things went on as before, only every day was increasing the incapacity of Miss Burney to do any work whatsoever—every day was bringing her nearer to Death's door, and that we know is never double-padlocked, except on the inside.

Fanny was anxious to resign, but she knew that not only had she to reckon with the Queen, but her father had also to be taken into account in this connection; and she seemed ready to die on her feet—that is certainly how she would have died—rather than cause him any annoyance. It so happened, however, that she was not called on to make such a sacrifice. The Handel Commemoration was to be held in Westminster Abbey, and the King sent her a ticket for the performance of the Master's greatest work. She went to the Abbey, and for the rest of her life she attributed her deliverance to this *Messiah*.

She sat beside her father, and thus encouraged by the breadth and volume of the sublime choruses, and feeling that her father must be affected by the pathos of some of the airs that breathe of paternal solicitude, she had a three hours' conference with him upon the intolerable position in which she found herself, and upon her desire for release. She poured all her story into his ears, and it must have come upon him with the force of a revelation while the voice in the choir gave forth the inspiring notes of *Comfort ye My People*. Never surely was there a more imposing *obbligato* to a child's piteous appeal to be saved from all she dreaded.

"I was lost to all private comfort," she told him—"dead to all domestic endearment: I was worn with want of rest and fatigued with duties; and all that in life was dearest to me—my friends, my chosen society, my best affections—lived now in my mind only by recollection and rested upon that with nothing but bitter regret. With relations the most deservedly dear, with friends of almost unequalled goodness, I lived like an orphan—like one who has no natural ties, and must make her way as she could by those that were factitious."

This was the burden of her story, and her father listened to it in silence. "I turned to look at him," she wrote; "but how was I struck to see his honoured head bowed down almost to his bosom with dejection and discomfort!—we were both perfectly still a few moments; but when he raised his head I could hardly keep my seat, to see his eyes filled with tears. 'I



have long,' he cried, 'been uneasy, though I have not spoken . . . but . . . if you wish to resign—my house, my purse, my arms shall be open to receive you back.'"

That was all, and we like to think that when he had spoken those words the chorus *Hallelujah* burst forth from the choir. If it did not, no matter; that was the chorus which little Miss Burney was singing with all her heart and soul as she stood with streaming eyes among the pillars of the Abbey aisle.

A few months after her chronicle of the crisis that promised so well she records that she had finished her first tragedy, but she is uncertain "what species of a composition it may prove"; she can only say that it was "an almost spontaneous work"—we should think so, indeed—"and soothed the melancholy of imagination for a while."

It is plain that the sense of her coming release inspired her to do "some species of a composition." She wrote two tragedies—the first was *Cerulia* and the second *Edwy and Elgiva*.

And then—from tragedy to comedy—she found Mr. Boswell waiting for her one Sunday coming out of St. George's Chapel. "His comic-serious face and manner had lost nothing of their wonted singularity, nor yet have his mind and language," she wrote.

And Mr. Boswell, having heard all the comments of Windsor about Miss Burney's illness, breaks out into a passionate speech exhorting her to resign, raising his voice so that the whole of the Queen's

entourage may hear him. "If you do not quit, ma'am, very soon some violent measures, I assure you, will be taken. We shall address Dr. Burney in a body; I am ready to make the harangue myself."

But he did not come to Windsor to pray Miss Burney to resign. He wanted her help very badly for his *Life of Johnson*. The book needed lightening, he thought, and he asked her to hand over to him all the letters that she had received from "great Sam, and solemn Sam, and learned Sam—I want to show him as gay Sam, agreeable Sam, pleasant Sam."

She excused herself, but, Boswell-like, he followed her, and pulling proof-sheets out of his pocket, insisted on reading one of Johnson's letters aloud, while the people were standing on each side of the rails waiting for the King and Queen to come up. She had to rush away from him. He failed to embellish his immortal work with any of his "gay Sam's" sportive letters to her.

If the *Messiah* formed an appropriate background, so to speak, for her petition to her father, assuredly *Israel in Egypt* was the oratorio that should have been chosen for the same purpose when she was making her appeal to the Queen. The hardness of the heart of Pharaoh was not greater than Queen Charlotte's would be when called on to let her tirewoman go. A memorial of the most humble pattern was prepared—it could not have been in a more servile vein if it had been a petition for freedom offered by a slave to the master by whom he was purchased—but it was one thing to compose such

a masterpiece of servility and quite another to present it. Fanny lacked courage to do so. For two months it lay in her letter-case, and in the meantime she was growing weaker and weaker. But the gracious lady refused to take any notice of so insignificant a detail in the slave whom she had purchased. "I saw that she had no suspicion but that I was hers for life," Fanny wrote; and at the same time she records that the war was over and the hope of obtaining the command of a ship for her brother demolished, so that we begin to perceive that her fear of the Queen was only one of the reasons she had for holding back her petition to be allowed to resign: she had hopes of being able to further the interests of her brother in his profession. Mr. Smelt had assured her that her position near the Queen would give her many chances of helping her friends, but we do not hear she was notably successful in this way.

And so the second month went by and the petition remained in her letter-case. Every one about her became alarmed at the change in her appearance, and her old friend Mrs. de Luc came to her with tears in her eyes to implore her to send in her resignation. "I could not, however, summon courage," wrote Fanny. "My heart always failed me, from seeing the Queen's entire freedom from such an expectation; for though I was frequently so ill in her presence that I could hardly stand, I saw she concluded me, while life remained, inevitably hers."



*While life remained.* But this condition which made possession possible seemed likely to be changed before long. One morning she was in the Queen's room, "half dead with real illness, excessive nervousness, and the struggle of what I had to force myself to perform." The crisis had come. She tried to articulate, expressing to the Queen that she had something of deep consequence to herself to lay before Her Majesty, but that she was unequal in her weak state to speak it, so had ventured to commit it to writing, and now entreated permission to produce it.

The Queen told her that she had better give it to Mrs. Schwollenberg for transmission to herself, and apparently the next day Fanny brought the original memorial and a supplemental one as well to the person named, but this person insisted on being informed as to the nature of the contents of the documents. Fanny was then compelled to own that they contained her resignation.

Of course this acknowledgment called for a tirade from the person, but Fanny Burney could be firm enough at times, and no amount of bullying had any effect upon her now. Mrs. Schwollenberg had to carry off the memorial to the Queen, and when she returned, after a short interval, she was in that most detestable of all attitudes that an enemy can assume—the complacent pose of the smiling hypocrite. She tried to cajole Fanny into the belief that all she wanted was a few weeks' rest: she and the Queen had plainly talked over the matter

together, and she was Her Majesty's plenipotentiary to bring Miss Burney to terms. But Miss Burney was firm, both with the ambassadress and her Royal mistress. There was to be no compromise—she felt that the question was resignation or death.

So she told Mrs. Schwellenberg. Fanny got a letter from her father in which he expressed his satisfaction at the "clemency"—that was his word—shown by the Queen in accepting the memorials, but he would not sanction anything less than permanent resignation. Mrs. Schwellenberg heard, and her mask of cajolery was thrown away. "She uttered the most furious expressions of indignant contempt at our proceedings," wrote Fanny. "I am sure she would gladly have confined us both in the Bastille, had England such a misery, as a fit place to bring us to ourselves, from a daring so outrageous against imperial wishes."

But England had not a Bastille—neither, for that matter, had France by over a year in December, 1790—and Fanny Burney believed that she was now free. Alas! she might have had a chance of hearing *Israel in Egypt* at the next Handel Commemoration and of taking a lively personal interest in the impressive illustrations of the means by which the freedom of the slaves was brought about, before she found herself in a position to sing the song of Miriam. The next Handel Commemoration had come and gone, and so had the King's birthday on June 4th—giving her a chance of describing a lively scene

in which the Duke of Clarence figured as Jack ashore, calling out in Mrs. Schwellenberg's drawing-room for champagne and more champagne and still more champagne, in which every one should drink the King's health, God bless him!—and still she was by the side of the Queen.

She had handed in her memorial in December, 1790, and it was not until July 7, 1791, that she was permitted to take leave of all her friends who were at Kew while she drove to London to be in attendance on the Queen at the Drawing-room for the last time—not quite the last time, for Her Majesty on this day begged her to be in attendance at the next function of the same sort, which was to take place in a fortnight.

The leave-taking with Mrs. Schwellenberg was scarcely so affecting as that with the Queen; but Mrs. Schwellenberg was for once affable: she was good enough to offer her the reversion of her place by her retirement or by her death. But the account of Miss Burney's last formal attendance upon the Queen is touching in every way. Her Majesty had her handkerchief in her hand or at her eyes the whole time, and Fanny was so greatly overcome that, when the King came to say goodbye to her, she could not compose herself sufficiently to allow of his carrying out his intention; and seeing her in that condition, he tactfully walked away.

"They were now all going," wrote Fanny. "I took for the last time the cloak of the Queen, and putting it over her shoulders, slightly ventured to



press them, earnestly, though in a low voice, saying, 'God Almighty bless your Majesty.'

"She turned round," continues the chronicle, "and putting her hand upon my ungloved arm, pressed it with the greatest kindness, saying, 'May you be happy!'"

That was the last scene of all. Not a word could Miss Burney utter to the three Princesses, who met her in the next room to wish her well.

"Here, therefore, end my Court Annals," wrote Fanny Burney, "after having lived in the service of Her Majesty five years within ten days—from July 17, 1786, to July 7, 1791."



44

CONCERNING MADAME D'ARBLAY





## CHAPTER XXX

### CONCERNING MADAME D'ARBLAY

IT is outside the scope of the present volume to follow Fanny Burney into the world after seeing her press her handkerchief to her eyes at the gates of the Queen's House. The story of her life as the Junior Keeper of the Robes naturally ends with her last duty to Queen Charlotte, when she placed the cloak upon Her Majesty's shoulders—for that affectionate pressure of her hands and her farewell benediction were strictly unofficial. But we cannot leave her with the abruptness shown by Milton toward the victims of the expulsion from the Paradise of his epic, who, into the cold world—

“Through Eden took their solitary way.”

A few pages must be devoted to a summary of the leading events of the remainder of her long life. The fact that she lived to see the granddaughter of her Royal mistress Queen of England and the mother of children suggests that, after all, no serious undermining of her constitution resulted from her five years' service. When she left the Queen's House she was thirty-nine, and for close upon half a century

she drew the pension of £100 which had been granted to her.

It was certainly the intention of that very practical artist, her father, that on leaving the Court she should take up the threads of her literary life where she had dropped them—not, it must be remembered in 1786, when she went to Windsor, but in 1782, when she published *Cecilia*. He took care that a sufficient supply of pens and paper were placed on her desk, and he may have hinted at the pleasure with which he and the rest of the world would receive a few more novels as brilliant as her last.

Five years, however, had elapsed before she published another novel, and the world decided that it was not nearly so brilliant as *Cecilia*, and though it was much more “paying,” the payment did not go to Dr. Burney, but to a certain Brigadier-General, retired (by flight) from the army of the French King, whom she had married, and thus it was that Dr. Burney failed to reap the benefit of it.

The truth was that Fanny Burney loved life and its associations too dearly to allow of her devoting herself to the work of producing book after book, after the style of a modern author. Her desire was to take up the threads of her old friendships rather than of her literary life. She was devoted to her sisters, who were not geniuses but only mothers, and to her dear “Fredy” Locke and all the Norbury people from whom she had been separated for so long; so she promptly went on a round of visits, after a recruiting excursion to Devonshire; and her next



appeal to the public was through the medium of a tragedy—one of the two that she had written in some form during the years of her service—and now she was working at a third! It may have been that her thoughts were dwelling too deeply upon the tragedies of life rather than the comedies, or that, as is so frequently the case, she had become perverse enough to fancy that her best powers could only be made apparent in the opposite direction to that in which they had proved most acceptable to the public—it is the broad comedian who believes that his life has been wasted because he has never had a chance of playing *Hamlet*—but, however this may be, the tragedy was a failure: it was played for one night only. If Sheridan had been disposed to become a second Daddy Crisp to her, the result of the collaboration might have been worthy of the reputation of the author of *The Rivals* and of the author of *Evelina*; but even if Sheridan had had any leaning in the direction of such an association of talents, she would not have consented to it; for she prided herself on chilling Sheridan by her disapprobation of the part he had played in the Hastings Impeachment. She had her revenge upon him, for he was induced to produce her tragedy of *Edwy and Elgiva* in 1795, on the recommendation of Kemble, who, with Mrs. Siddons, endeavoured to put a stately life into it, but without success.

The French Revolution, to which, as we have already mentioned, she had devoted but a very small portion of her Diary, though one might have fancied that little else was talked of even in the Windsor tea-

room, was destined to play an important part in her life, for among the fugitives who, as usual, found an asylum in England, there was a Monsieur Alexandre d'Arblay, who had been made *Maréchal de Camp* to Lafayette on promotion from Narbonne's regiment—the Count himself was among the *émigrés*—and meeting him at Mickleham when she was on a visit to the Lockes, Fanny became greatly interested in him, and thought the opportunity of improving her French should not be neglected. She did not neglect it. Monsieur d'Arblay became her teacher “for pronunciation,” she specified, and he also gave her long daily lessons in reading. From the first they became attached, and people who fancied that because she was close upon forty-one she was “safe,” found that they had made a great mistake. She fell deeply in love with Monsieur d'Arblay, and, in spite of his being a Roman Catholic, a foreigner, wholly without means, and dispossessed of employment, she announced her intention of marrying him, when he had proposed to her.

But Dr. Burney had to be reckoned with. He discouraged the match by all the means in his power, and he was hardly to be blamed for doing so. Even if his daughter's pension of £100 a year would be enough for her to live on and to support a penniless husband on, it was by no means certain that the Queen would think herself justified in continuing this allowance for the benefit of a Frenchman and a Catholic. Fanny was too dutiful a daughter to marry without her father's consent, for in those primitive

times there was no age-limit to the authority of a parent, and the claims of a girl of forty-one to think for herself and to act for herself were no more admitted than they would have been if she had been still in the nursery. But the opinion of the wealthy Mr. Locke of Norbury Park to the effect that a pair might start life on £100 a year, and the advocacy of Fanny's sister Susan, prevailed upon Dr. Burney's good sense and well-founded prejudices, and he gave a grudging consent to the marriage. It took place in Mickleham Church on July 31, 1793, a second ceremony being performed in the Sardinian Chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields the next day.

The ex-Brigadier and his wife settled down to the romantic joys of love in a cottage—not the *cottage orné* of the bridegroom's Tuileries experience—not the cottage of one of Watteau's *Fêtes Champêtres*, but the real thing, with a garden of cabbages, potatoes, and asparagus, the last named being, in an excess of zeal, rooted up as a weed by the soldier whose sword had been turned into a pruning-hook.

Fanny's account of their life at this time is written in as sprightly a vein as that of her early Journals; and when a son made his appearance, she sings her *Magnificat* with enthusiasm. An appeal written by her and addressed to the ladies of England on behalf of the French clergy who had been driven to England, was actually her first published work since *Cecilia* had appeared eleven years before. But whatever money it may have brought to the "cause" it advocated, it brought none to the writer, and she was soon in need



of some. It seems strange to us, in these days of prolific authorship, that it should not have occurred to her long before to write another novel. The profits of *Cecilia* must have amounted to several thousands of pounds, though we know from one of the family diaries that Burney sold the copyright for £250. But Fanny had gained experience, and she would not have been rash had she assumed that at least the £2,000 which Walpole said she had received from *Cecilia* would be forthcoming for a fresh venture of a similar type. It was not until 1794, however, that she set to work and produced *Camilla, a Picture of Youth*, publishing it by subscription two years later, and making, it was calculated, £3,000 by the venture. If all the subscribers had shown themselves to be as generous as Edmund Burke, who sent twenty guineas for one set of volumes, her profits would have been quadrupled. This from her enemy was surely not surpassed by Hastings, her friend, though he affirmed that he would attack the West Indies with a subscription list on her behalf. He had been triumphantly acquitted the previous year of all the charges brought against him—he had only to pay the magnificent costs of the spectacular entertainment in Westminster Hall—and he knew that Fanny had fought for him, in spite of her frequent association with Windham during the trial.

The novel was dedicated to the Queen, Fanny carrying the presentation set to Windsor to offer it in person to Her Majesty, who received it very graciously; and the author received at the hands of

her own successor in the dining-room a packet containing a hundred guineas from the King and Queen in acknowledgment of the compliment of the dedication. (She told the latter that she had thought out the story when in Her Majesty's service.)

As to the merits of the work there has been on the whole very little difference of opinion among the ablest critics who have referred to it. Macaulay, dealing with *Cecilia*, said boldly, in the picturesque idiom of his day, that some passages of it were written either by Johnson or the devil. Of *Camilla* we might say the same, only that we know it could not have been written by Johnson. Its Johnsonese is, however, fairly diabolical. Its style possesses all that is ponderous in Johnson's without a trace of its force. It is stilted, pedantic, and dull.

Out of the proceeds a small house was built and named Camilla Cottage, and here, within a short distance of Dorking, the d'Arblay family enjoyed for several years a retirement rather more monastic even than that against which Fanny had once rebelled. In 1798 she wrote a comedy, and it was accepted at Covent Garden, but when it was put into rehearsal the following year, Dr. Burney, who was present, predicted for it such a failure as forced his daughter and her husband to withdraw it. Dr. Burney seems to have set up a very strict censorship in respect of his daughter's comedies, and she had, we think, every reason to complain of his severity.

The next year the news of the death of her sister, Mrs. Phillips, reached her; and before

she had recovered from the shock she was on her way to France, where she joined her husband, who had gone to Paris to try to recover some of his confiscated property or to get employment under the great First Consul. He was successful only in obtaining a retiring allowance of £62 10s. per annum at first, but later he got a situation in the Office of Public Buildings, and resided with his wife and child at Passy. For more than ten years, while war was incessant, the d'Arblays lived in France. Fanny had one serious illness, but in 1812 she managed to get back to England with her son. Only by the aid of a passport to America did she contrive to leave France, so strict was the watch kept upon the coast. She had made an attempt to effect a crossing previously, but it had failed.

Once more the want of money forced Madame d'Arblay into the ranks of working authors. It was to send her son to Cambridge that she published *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*. It appeared in five volumes in 1814, and the value of her name on a title-page was shown by the sale of 3,600 copies at two guineas a copy. Her name was, however, the only thing of value in the book. The same year her father died at the age of eighty-eight, his daughter being by his side; and before many months had passed she was presented to Louis XVIII., who complimented her highly on her fame, and told her that he had read her books "very often." The immediate result of her loyalty



to the Bourbons was a commission for her husband in the *Corps de Gardes* and the acknowledgment of his rank of *Maréchal de Camp*.

On returning with him to France this vision of prosperity was too soon dispersed by the tyrant's escape from Elba, followed by that period of suspense known as the Hundred Days. The King hurried from Paris and Napoleon entered the city. Madame d'Arblay remained there as long as was safe, and then, with the Princesse d'Henin, hastened to Brussels, where, with thousands of other fugitives, she awaited the crisis—the greatest that Europe had known for centuries—Waterloo. Her account of the Waterloo week is one of the most spirited descriptions that ever came from her pen. In fact, everything that she wrote as she wrote her Diaries, without any striving after literary effect, was admirable. No more vivid series of pictures of panic, of despair alternating with triumph, of the dementia of dread alternating with the hysteria of delight—all equally groundless—have ever been written on the strenuous Waterloo days at Brussels, unless by some one who was indebted to Madame d'Arblay, as was Thackeray, for the groundwork of the narrative.

The Brigadier was never a very lucky man, and just when he had reason for expecting some compensation for his years of adversity, he was kicked by a horse and compelled to retire from active service. Less than three years later he died at Bath. His widow had still twenty-two years of

life before her : they were spent mostly in London, and they were uneventful, except for her work of compiling the *Memoirs* of her father. She died on January 4, 1840, three years after her son. Unhappily the blight of that stilted style which affected all her later compositions is conspicuous on almost every page of the *Memoirs*, though the book cannot be read without interest by every student of the eighteenth century. Had it been written in the natural style that makes her Diaries from first to last a delight not only to students but to all manner of readers, it would better deserve the praise given to it by Southey :—

“Except Boswell’s, there is no other work in our language which carries us into such society, and makes us fancy that we are acquainted with the persons to whom we are there introduced.”

The words of this encomium, even withdrawing the exception made by Southey, might, in our opinion, reasonably be applied to her own Diary. She was an infinitely more intelligent observer than Boswell, and certainly an infinitely fairer critic ; for by letting every one into her secret prejudices, she shuts out the possibility of any reader being prejudiced by any statement she makes under this influence. It was her over-sensitiveness in matters of taste that prevented her Diary from becoming as popular as Boswell’s great work. She was unfortunate enough to be endowed with good taste, but this was an affliction that never caused Mr. Boswell an hour’s uneasiness.

We cannot better conclude this brief sketch of the latter years of Madame d'Arblay than by quoting from the Diary of the greatest novelist of the nineteenth century his account of meeting the author of the most delightful Diary of the eighteenth. It was on November 18, 1826, that Sir Walter Scott visited her, and thus records this interesting event:—

“Introduced to Madame d'Arblay, the celebrated authoress of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, an elderly lady with no remains of personal beauty, but with a simple and gentle manner, and pleasing expression of countenance, and apparently quick feelings. She told me she had wished to see two persons—myself, of course, being one, the other George Canning. This was really a compliment to be pleased with—a nice little handsome pat of butter made up by a neat-handed Phillis of a dairymaid, instead of the grease fit only for cart-wheels which one is dosed with by the pound. I trust I shall see this lady again.”

And this is just what an intelligent reader will say on laying down the volumes of her Diary kept when she was a Keeper of the Robes.

THE END



## INDEX

- ABBEY, Westminster, Handel Com-  
 memoration held in, 437  
 Amelia, Princess, 184, 186, 187,  
 192, 423-424  
 Ancaster, Duchess of, Mistress of  
 the Robes, 177, 240, 257, 267,  
 271, 371  
*Animated Nature*, Goldsmith's, 292  
 Anne, Queen, 151  
 Antoinette, Marie, Burke's refer-  
 ence to, 388  
 Aram, Eugene, 34  
 d'Arblay, Alexandre, Fanny Bur-  
 ney's husband, 19, 452 ; death  
 of, 457  
 d'Arblay, Madame (Fanny Bur-  
 ney), 252 ; marriage, 453 ; pre-  
 sented to Louis XVIII., 456 ;  
 death of, 458  
 Arbuthnot, 151  
 Argand, Monsieur Aime, of lamp-  
 burner fame, 201  
 Arne, Dr., 29-31  
 Arnolfini, Jean, and his wife (the  
 picture of), 7, 11  
 Augier, 220, 293  
 Augusta, Princess 189, 193, 313  
 Austen, Lady, of Olney, toilette of,  
 266  
  
 BAKER, DR. (Sir George), physician  
 to the King, 402, 407, 436  
*Bath Guide*, 96  
 Bay's Hill Lodge, 389  
  
 Bedlam, 203  
 Begums, charges respecting the,  
 against Warren Hastings, 359  
 Bertie, Lady Charlotte, 267, 271  
 Birthday Ball at St. James's Palace,  
 the Queen's, 302 ; Miss Burney's  
 adventures at, 302-06  
 Boswell, 71, 97, 98, 110, 111, 318,  
 383, 439, 440, 458  
 Boucher, 7  
 Bowdler, Miss, volume of ser-  
 mons written by, 278, 335  
 Brighthelmstone, Prince of Wales  
 living at, 334  
 Brighton, Prince of Wales offers  
 his villa at, as convalescent  
 home for His Majesty, 427  
 Bryant, 313  
 Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller,  
 73, 159, 277  
 Buckingham Palace, 304  
 Bunbury, Mr. H. W., famous  
 caricaturist, at Windsor as  
 equerry to Duke of York,  
 325-29  
 Burney, Charles, 29, 87, 350  
 Burney, Dr., father of Fanny  
 Burney, 15, 16, 19-24, 27-37, 51,  
 57, 67, 69, 72, 75, 85, 88, 90, 97,  
 112, 117, 118, 124-26, 136, 278,  
 291, 300, 301, 456  
 Burney, Fanny, birth and parent-  
 age of, 27-37 ; influence of the  
 Garricks on, 43 ; her first

lessons in French, 61; her first novel, *Evelina*, accepted by Mr. Lowndes, 88; attachment of Mrs. Thrale to, 109; a comedy, *The Wiltshire*, written by, 115; *Cecilia*, popularity of, 117; her faculty for forming friendships, 119; first meeting of, with the King, 126, 127; her father's concern as to her future, 136-37; appointment as Keeper of the Robes accepted by, 142; her reception by the Queen, 143; arduous duties of, 155-59; civility of Court officials to, 169; a breach of etiquette, 190; the fairness of her references to people, 208-09; her preference for conversations with high moral tone, 217; her admiration for Colonel Greville, 225; a pattern of discretion, 226; antagonism of Mrs. Schwellenberg to, 232-47, 412; her firm stand for dignity approved by the Queen, 259; with the Royal family at Oxford, 239, 254, 265-67; recognised at Oxford University as daughter of a Doctor of Music, 271; friendship of, with Miss Planta, 274; her meetings with Herschel, 277; her apprehensiveness in lending the Queen Dr. Burney's *State of Music in Germany*, 293-96; and Colonel Goldsworthy, 298; adventure after Queen's Birthday Ball, 302-06; her impression of Bunbury, the caricaturist, as a man, 328-29; resignation of, falsely reported in newspapers, 339-40; her account of the trial of Warren Hastings contrasted with Macaulay's, 342; partisan-

ship of, for Hastings, 343; and Mr. Windham, 356-62; at the trial of Warren Hastings, 371, 381; visit of, to Cheltenham with the Royal Family, 389; attachment of, to Colonel Digby, 392-94; the King and, in Kew Gardens, 415-17; congratulatory lines on the King's recovery written by, 423; her account of Royal journey to Dorsetshire, 427; her criticism of Mrs. Siddons as Rosalind, 430; breakdown of her health, 434-35; her anxiety to resign her post, 437; discussion of her position with her father, 438-439; her resignation sent to the Queen, 442; her leave-taking of the Queen, 444-45; granted a pension of £100, 449-50; marriage of, to Alexandre d'Arblay, 452-53; *Camilla* written by, 454; *The Wanderer* published in 1814, 456; presented to Louis XVIII., 456; her account of the Waterloo week, 457; *Memoirs* of her father compiled by, 458; death of, 458; description of a visit to, by Sir Walter Scott, 459

Burney, James, Captain, 33-35, 73, 371; outspoken criticism of Burke's speech at Warren Hastings's trial, 374

Burney, Mrs., first wife of Dr. Burney, death of, 41

Burney, Mrs., the second, 57-9, 61, 68, 69, 92, 99, 100

Burney, Susan, 61, 99

Burni, Maestro, 74

Burke, Edmund, 73, 97, 130, 142, 215, 341-44; great speech at trial of Warren Hastings, 371-77

- Burke, Richard, elder brother of  
Edmund Burke, 349  
Byron, II, 17
- CAGLIOSTRO, 203  
Cambridge, Miss, 140, 141  
*Camilla*, 18, 20, 56, 113, 199; dedi-  
cated to the Queen, 454  
*Camilla* Cottage, near Dorking,  
the d'Arblay family at, 455  
Canning, George, 459  
Caroline, Queen, 149-52  
*Cecilia*, 17, 18, 20, 81, 112, 116-18,  
124, 125, 127, 204, 285, 314-15,  
320, 384, 450, 453  
Cerbera (Mrs. Schwellenberg),  
233, 239  
*Cerulia*, tragedy written by Fanny  
Burney, 439  
Chambers, Sir Thomas, 153  
Charlotte, Queen, 4, 11, 12, 49; her  
admiration for Mrs. Delany, 124  
meeting of, with Fanny Burney  
at Mrs. Delany's, 129, 131; Mr.  
Smelt commissioned by, to offer  
Fanny Burney the post of Keeper  
of the Robes, 132; reception of  
Fanny Burney by, 143; the daily  
round of Fanny Burney's duties  
to, 154-63; her treatment of  
Fanny Burney, 171; her ex-  
change of caresses with the  
King, 286-87; Dr. Burney's  
book, *The Present State of Music  
in Germany*, borrowed by,  
291-96; accepts Birthday Ode,  
written by Dr. Burney, 301; her  
Birthday Ball at St. James's  
Palace, 302; at Fauconberg  
Hall, 389-90; her distress at  
the King's illness, 405-06;  
slander circulated about, 411;  
affected at Fanny Burney's  
leave-taking, 444
- Chelsea Hospital, Dr. Burney  
organist of, 130  
Cheltenham, Fanny Burney goes  
to, with Royal Family, 389-  
95  
Chenany, Jeanne de, 7  
Chessington, 58, 67, 68, 76, 98-100,  
103, 107, 116, 117  
Chessington Hall, 48, 51  
Cholmondeley, Lord, 97, 101  
Cholmondeley, Mrs., 97, 107,  
384  
Christ Church, Royalty at, 270  
Chroniques Scandaleuses, 14  
Cibber, Mrs., sister of Dr. Arne,  
29  
Claremont, Lady, 343  
Clarence, Duke of, 437  
Clayton, Lady Louisa, 131  
Colman, George, 73, 84  
Colonels in the Diary, 220  
Commons, House of, Lady Clare-  
mont's description of members  
of, 130  
Cook, Lieutenant, 73  
Copes, the, 363  
*Cornhill*, Thackeray's "Four  
Georges" lecture in, 190  
Court-days, special dress for,  
155  
Court Diary, 14, 19  
Courtown, Lord, 390  
Cradock, Walpole's "country  
gentleman," 49  
Crewe, Mrs., daughter of the  
Grevilles, 72, 382  
Crisp, Samuel, 48-52, 55-57, 73,  
98-100, 104, 113, 116, 124  
Crutchley, Mr., 349, 367, 377  
Croker, 238, 281  
Cumberland, 84
- Death of Abel*, Gesner's, 34  
Delany, Dr., 119



- Delany, Mrs., 49, 86, 123-29, 140, 143, 163, 172, 173, 185, 189, 190, 192, 193, 202, 225, 232, 281, 335, 421
- De Luc, Mr., geologist and Court Reader, 223, 242-43, 436
- Derby, Earl of, 314
- Dewes, Miss, 128
- Dewes, Mr., 127, 128
- Diary-Letters, 56, 177, 392
- Diary, value of the, 209, 287
- Digby, Colonel Stephen ("Colonel Fairly"), Vice-Chamberlain to the Queen, 215; marriage of, to Miss Gunning, 218; Fanny Burney's cordial relations with, 433
- Digby, Mrs., 219
- Dobson, Mr. Austin, 264, 278, 316
- Dodsley, 86
- Dramatist, The*, farce by O'Keefe, 431
- Dryden, 192
- Dürer, Albrecht, *Melancholia* of, 253
- Edwy and Elgiva*, tragedy written by Miss Burney, 439, 451
- Effingham, Lady, First Lady of the Bedchamber, 169, 170, 172, 403
- Egerton, Mrs. Ariana, Bedchamber woman, 298
- Elizabeth, Princess, 189, 193, 254
- Elliot, Gilbert, first Earl of Minto and Governor-General of India, 349
- English Merchant, The*, read by Fanny Burney to the Queen, 437
- Etiquette of Royal dressing-room, 150-53
- Evelina*, Fanny Burney's first novel, 17, 20-22, 44, 49, 56, 57, 60, 77, 81, 82, 85, 89, 90-2, 95, 96, 98-101, 104, 107, 113-15, 117, 118, 124, 128, 167, 177, 204, 251, 254, 278, 285, 304, 312, 316, 344, 348, 423, 451
- Evelyn, Caroline, 60, 81, 91
- Exeter, 311; Royal tour to, 431
- FALCONER'S *Shipwreck*, 393, 394
- Farren, Miss, 314
- Fauconberg Hall, or Bay's Hill Lodge, Royal Family at, 389
- Festivities for the King's recovery, 427
- Fielding, Mrs., Bedchamber woman, 153
- Fite, Madame de la, 170, 199-202, 205, 206
- FitzHerbert, Mrs., 334, 430
- FitzRoy, Colonel, and Princess Amelia, 184
- "Four Georges" lecture, 190
- Fox, Charles James, 72, 345; at Warren Hastings's trial, 381
- Fragonard, 7
- Francesca of Dante, 394
- Gaberlunzie Man, The*, 63
- Gainsborough, 11
- Garrick, 42, 44, 49, 50, 71, 317
- Garricks, the, 42; influence of, on Fanny Burney, 43
- Genlis, Madame de, 14, 200-03
- George III., King, and Dr. Burney, 126; first meeting of, with Fanny Burney at Mrs. Delany's house, 126-27; his annoyance at post of Master of the King's Band not being given to Dr. Burney, 131; narrow escape of assassination by Margaret Nicholson, 188; reference of, to Mrs. Schwellenberg, 245; presentation of address to, at Oxford University, 267-70; ex-

- change of caresses with the Queen, recorded by Miss Burney, 286-87; illness of, 400 *et seq.*; his recovery, 423; farewell to Fanny Burney on her resignation as Keeper of the Robes, 444
- Gillray, 327
- Goldsmith, Oliver, 313, 318, 326, 327
- Goldsworthy, Colonel, 222, 224, 282-84, 297
- Goldsworthy, Miss, 315, 406
- Gomme, Miss, 348; interest of, in Gilbert Elliot, first Earl of Minto, 349
- Gordon, Lord George, 203
- Gouthière, 7
- Great Wild Street—a corruption of Weld Street, 430
- Greville, Colonel Robert Fulke ("Mr. Welbred"), 219, 220, 225
- Grevilles, the, 72
- Guiffardiére, Rev. Charles de ("Mr. Turbulent"), 205-07, 209-11, 219, 237, 238, 241, 391, 436
- Gunning, Miss, marriage of, to Colonel Digby, 218, 434
- Gwyn, Colonel, equerry to King George III., 194, 326, 390, 428
- Gwyn, Mrs. (Goldsmith's "Jessamy Bride"), 194, 320, 326
- HAGGERDORN, Mrs., 129, 132, 153, 169, 172, 173, 200, 225, 227, 234, 235, 252
- Hairdresser, importance of, in the eighteenth century, 264
- Hamlet*, 318, 451
- Hampstead, view of, from Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, 61
- Handel, 171, 183, 269, 420
- Handel Commemoration, 126, 437, 443
- Handelian, King George III. a thorough, 171
- Harcourt, General, 267, 273
- Harcourt, Lady, 257-59, 267
- Harcourt, Lord, 254, 267, 273
- Harcourt, Mrs., 320
- Hastings, Mrs., 174, 215
- Hastings, Warren, 174; character of, 215; Impeachment of, 341-50
- Hawkesbury, Lady, 363
- Heberden, Dr., called in to attend the King, 403
- Herschel, Dr., 223, 277, 278
- Highgate, 61
- History of Music*, Dr. Burney's, 33, 51, 60, 61, 67, 68, 75-77, 130, 420
- Hood, Thomas, 34
- Hornecks, the beautiful Miss (Goldsmith's "Little Comedy" and "Jessamy Bride"), 326
- Hugget, Mr., chaplain to the King, 267
- Hundred Days, the, 457
- ILCHESTER, Earl of, daughter of, married to Colonel Digby, 215
- Illumination of London at public thanksgiving for the King's restoration to health, 423
- Imagination, Pleasures of*, 393
- JAMES'S POWDERS, Royal Family's faith in, 402-3
- Jephtha*, 126
- Johnson, Dr., 56, 71-3, 76, 97, 98, 103, 108, 111-13, 118, 318, 383, 384, 455
- Jordan, Mrs., actress, 325, 329
- Josephus, a medium for display of elocution, 241
- KELLY, 84
- Kemble, 451
- Kenyon, Lord Chief Justice, 387

- Kew, 174, 176, 177, 179, 187, 191,  
246, 251, 400, 408  
Kew Gardens, Fanny Burney's  
adventure with the King in,  
415-22  
Kew Lodge, 175, 246  
King, Dr., 74  
King's Band, the, Dr. Burney and  
Mastership of, 421  
King's Lynn, 58
- LABICHE, 293  
*La Coquette Corrigée*, 210  
Lady of Quality, toilette of the,  
264  
Lamb, Charles, 34  
Lancelot and Guinevere, 394  
Lansdowne, Lord, 123  
Leaders of fashion, Miss Burney's  
books read by, 135  
*Lectures*, Hunter's, read by the  
Queen, 402  
Leicester Fields, 70  
*Le Mie Prigioni*, 17  
*Les Femmes Savantes*, Molière's,  
115  
Leverick, Mrs., the town Ward-  
robe woman, 176  
*Life of Johnson*, Boswell's, 11, 71,  
110, 440  
Locke, "Fredy," 450  
Locke, Mr. and Mrs., 170, 205  
Lockes, the, 225  
*London Chronicle*, 91  
Longleat, seat of the Marquis of  
Bath, Royal party at, 431  
Lords and Commons, congratu-  
latory address received by the  
King from, 424  
Lords, House of, trial of Warren  
Hastings by, 341  
Louis XVIII., Madame d'Arblay  
(Fanny Burney) presented to,  
456
- Lowndes, Mr. 87-90  
Luc, de, Mr., 242-43  
Luc, de, Mrs., 441  
Lulworth Castle, Royal party visit,  
430; the King and Queen's  
family interest in, 430  
Lyndhurst, Royal progress  
through, 427  
Lynn, 57, 60, 62  
Lytton, Bulwer, 34
- MACAULAY, LORD, 15-18, 20, 24, 49,  
88, 138, 188, 206, 207, 341-43  
MacBurney, James, Dr. Burney's  
father, 28  
Managers of the Prosecution at  
Warren Hastings's trial, 344,  
347, 381  
Manners, Colonel, his criticism of  
Herschel, 223; vocalism of, 224  
Marriage Act, the, of 1771, 334  
Mary, Princess, 192, 257, 291  
Masham, Lady, Bedchamber  
woman to Queen Anne, 151  
Mason, poet-painter, 264  
Mecklenburg, Charlotte of, Hag-  
gerdörn of, and Schwellenberg  
of, 234  
Mecklenburg ring, the, 169  
*Memoir of Dr. Burney*, 56, 113, 142,  
458  
Methusalem, Colonel Goldsworthy  
and, 288-89  
Mickleham Church, Fanny Burney  
married to Alexandre d'Arblay  
at, 453  
Minto, Earl of, Governor-General  
of India, 349  
Mithof, Mr., 279-80  
Montagu, Mr., member of Parlia-  
ment for Higham Ferrers, 348  
*Monthly Review*, 100  
Moore's *Life of Byron*, 11  
More, Hannah, 142



- Müthel, 74  
*Mysterious Mother, The*, 207
- NAPOLÉON, 457  
*Nautical Almanac*, 329  
 New Forest, Royal progress through the, 427  
 Newspapers and Fanny Burney's position in the Royal Family, 339-40  
 Newton, Sir Isaac, 69, 278  
 Nicholson, Margaret, attempt of, to assassinate the King, 188, 189  
 Nollekens, 73  
 Norbury Park, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Locke, 170, 200, 205  
 Novel-reading, Dr. Burney's objection to, 85  
 Novel, the, in the eighteenth century, 86  
 Nuneham Courtney, Lord Harcourt's place, 240, 254, 260, 265, 272, 273, 320
- ODE, Queen's Birthday, by Fanny Burney, 300-01  
*Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, 33  
 Omai, 73, 373  
 Opera House, Haymarket, 171  
*Original Love Letters between a Lady of Quality and a Person of Superior Condition*, Combe's, read by Fanny Burney and Colonel Digby, 393  
 Orloff, Count, favourite of the Russian Empress, 74  
 Ovid quoted, 269  
 Oxford, Royal visit to, 239, 254, 265; Mayor of, knighted, 271  
 Oxford, Vice-Chancellor of, presentation of address by, to the King, 263
- PACCHIEROTTI, 74  
 Passy, the d'Arblays reside at, 456
- Pepys, Mr., 3, 4, 142  
 Pepys, Sir Lucas, 407, 412  
 Perseus, 306  
 Phillips, Mrs., Fanny Burney's sister, death of, 455  
 Piozzi, Gabrielli, second husband of Mrs. Thrale, 72, 75, 111  
 Pitt and the Ministry, Burke's aim to discredit, 411  
 Planta, Miss, teacher to the Royal Princesses, 175, 176, 205, 237, 241, 255, 257-60, 267, 274, 393, 404  
*Pleasures of Imagination*, 393, 394  
 Poland Street, the Burneys' home in, 34, 44, 48, 58, 60, 69, 81  
*Polly Honeycombe*, Colman's, 436  
 Pope, 123  
 Port, Miss, Mrs. Delany's niece, 127, 128, 279  
 Portia, Mrs. Siddons as, 316  
 Portland, the Dowager Duchess of, 123, 124  
*Present State of Music in Germany, The*, Dr. Burney's, borrowed by the Queen, 291  
 Price, Major, famous backgammon player, 193, 221, 267  
 Princesses, six handsome, 185  
*Prisoner of Chillon, The*, 17  
*Probationary Odes*, 128
- QUALITY, Lady of, toilette of the, 264  
 Queen's bell, the, 167  
 Queen's Lodge, 142, 154, 191, 326, 330, 402, 406  
 Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, home of the Burneys, 61, 68, 69
- RAJAHS and Begums, 387  
 Ramsden, Colonel, 222  
 Ranees and Sahibs, 387  
 Rauzzini, 75

- Regency Bill abandoned, 423  
 Regency Committee, examination of doctors by, as to the King's condition, 411  
 Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 35, 70, 72, 73, 97, 109, 187, 240, 318, 320, 326, 348  
 Rissener, 7  
*Rivals, The*, 84, 451  
 Robe-keeper, Junior, 268, 313, 318, 449  
 Roche, Madame de la, 202-04  
 Rosalind, Mrs. Siddons as, 430  
 Round Tower, 154  
 Rowlandson, 327  
 Royal Drawing-room, 178  
 Royal Establishment, 238  
 Royal Lodge, 143, 175  
 Royal, Princess, 175, 186, 189, 193, 194, 239, 257, 313  
 ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, 439  
 St. James's, 176, 179, 239  
 St. James's Palace, Queen's Birthday Ball at, 302-03  
 St. James's Place, 123  
 St. James's Street, 176, 303  
 Salisbury, Lord, 131, 421  
 Salisbury, Royal progress through, 427  
 Saltram, Royal party at, 431  
 Sandhurst, 167  
 Sardinian Chapel, Lincoln's Inn Fields, 453  
 Sardou, 220, 293  
 Schwellenberg, Mrs., Senior Keeper of the Robes, 144, 154, 156, 158, 159, 169, 173, 175, 176, 179, 180, 193, 199, 215, 216, 225, 227, 231-47, 389, 412  
 Scott, Major, 356  
 Scott, Sir Walter, 99; visit of, to Madame d'Arblay, 459  
 Seymour, Queen Jane, 3, 4  
 Shakespeare, 325  
 Shepherd, Rev. Dr., Canon of Windsor and "Master of Mechanics" to the King, 331  
 Sheridan, R. B., 84, 115, 215, 341, 345, 372, 451  
 Siddons, Mrs., as Portia, and in *The Provok'd Husband*, 316; as *The Tragic Muse*, 318; pen-portrait of, by Fanny Burney, 318-19; at Weymouth, 429; as Rosalind, 430  
 Smelt, Mr., 125, 129-32, 135, 139, 158, 232, 311, 411  
 Sophia, Princess, 189, 192  
*Sorrows of Werther, The*, 204, 330  
 South Seas, the, 277  
 Speaker, the, "a sort of Representative of the King," 356  
 State visit to theatre, 431  
 Stoke Place, 172  
 Streatfields, the, 200  
 Streatham Hall, visit of Miss Burney to Mrs. Thrale at, 103, 108  
*Taller, The*, 334  
 Tessier, Le, 325  
 Thackeray, 190  
 Thanksgiving, public, for restoration of the King's health, 423  
 Thielky, Mrs., 154, 156, 159, 169  
 Thrale, Henry, 111, 367  
 Thrale, Mrs., 72, 97, 98, 101, 102, 103, 107, 109, 110, 111, 115-17, 125  
 Thurlow, 347, 355  
 Tobin, 84  
 Toilette of Queen Charlotte, 154-57  
 Tottenham Park, seat of Lord Ailesbury, 431  
 Trianon, Great and Little, 7, 10  
 Tuileries, 10  
 Turner, 11

- VAN EYCK, 7  
 Vernons, the Miss, Lady Harcourt's sisters, 258-59, 263, 267, 273  
 Versailles, 10  
 Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, presentation of address to the King by, 267  
*Virginia*, 50  
 WALDEGRAVE, Lady Elizabeth, 436  
 Wales, Prince of, married to Mrs. FitzHerbert, 334; reconciliation with the King and Queen, 335; visit of, to the King at Windsor, 408; his concern for the King's illness, 405  
 Walpole, Horace, 22, 23, 49, 143  
*Wanderer, The; or, Female Difficulties*, published by Madame d'Arblay, 456  
 Waterloo, 457  
 Watteau, 7, 453  
 Watts, Dr., 329  
*Waverley*, 97  
 Weld, great Catholic family of, 430  
 Wesley, Charles, Handel's compositions played by, at command of the King, 171  
 Westminster Abbey, 437  
 Westminster Hall, 343, 354, 357, 371, 381, 388, 454  
 Weymouth, Royal visit to, 427 *et seq.*  
 Wieland, poet, 202, 204  
 Willis, Dr. Francis, and his son, treatment of the King by, 409; Burke on, 410-11  
 Winchester, Royal progress though, 427  
 Windham, leading spirit of prosecution at Hastings's trial, 345, 350; Macaulay's eulogy of, 354; Hastings discussed with Fanny Burney, 359-61  
 Windsor, 161, 177-79, 188, 189, 200, 204, 232, 236, 239, 241, 245, 251, 254, 280, 431  
 Windsor Castle, 124, 126; Terrace of, 130, 158, 190, 191  
*Witlings, The*, 115  
*World*, the, publication of false news by, as to Fanny Burney's resignation, 339-40  
 YORK, Duke of, visit of, to the King and Queen at Windsor, 325-33; *rapprochement* between the Prince of Wales and his parents, brought about by, 334-36  
 York, Archbishop of, attitude of, towards Warren Hastings, 356-57









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